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TRAITS

OF

AMERICAN HUMOUR,

BY NATIVE AUTHORS.

EDITED AND ADAPTED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK,"

"THE OLD JUDGE," "THE ENGLISH IN AMERICA," &C. &C.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TRAITS

OF

AMERICAN HUMOUR.

I.

THE THIMBLE GAME.

Forty years ago, Augusta, Ga., presented a very different appearance from the busy and beautiful city of the present day. Its groceries, stores, and extensive warehouses were few in number, and the large quantities of cotton and other produce, which are still conveyed thither, were transported entirely by waggons. The substantial railroad, which links it with the richest and most beautiful regions of the empire state of the South, was a chimera, not yet

conceived in the wild brain of Fancy herself; and many of the improvements, luxuries and refinements, which now make it the second city in the state, were then "in the shell." *Yet,* by the honest yeomanry of forty years ago, Augusta was looked upon as Paris and London are now viewed by us. The man who had *never* been there was a cipher in the community—nothing killed an opinion more surely, nothing stopped the mouth of "argyment" sooner, than the sneering taunt: "Pshaw! you ha'n't been to *Augusty.*"

The atmosphere of this favoured place was supposed to impart knowledge and wisdom to all who breathed it, and the veriest ass was a Solon, and an umpire, if he could discourse fluently of the different localities, and various wonders, of *Augusty.*

The farmers of the surrounding country paid a yearly visit to Augusta, and having sold their "*crap*" of the great Southern staple, and laid in their stock of winter necessaries, returned home with something of that holy satisfaction with which the pious Mohammedan turns his face homeward from Mecca. The first step upon arriving in the city was to lay aside their "*copperas-coloured,*"

fabrics of the wife's or daughter's loom, and purchase a new suit of "*store*-clothes."

These were immediately donned, and upon returning home were carefully embalmed, nor again permitted to see the light until the next Sunday at "meetin'," when the farmer, with head erect and ample shirt-collar, strutted up the aisle, the lion of the occasion, the "observed of all observers" till the next Sabbath, when his neighbour returning with *his* new suit, plucked off his laurels and twined them green and blooming upon the crown of his own shilling beaver.

These annual trips were *the event* and *era* of the year, and the farmer returned to his home big with importance and news. The dishonesty and shrewdness of "them Gimblit fellers," (Cotton-Buyers,) the extortions of hotel-keepers, the singular failures of warehouse steelyards to make cotton-bales weigh as much in Augusta as at home, the elegant apparel of the city belles and beaux, and the sights and scenes which greeted their astonished gaze, formed the year's staple of conversation and discussion; and it would be difficult to say who experienced the greater delight—the farmer in relating his wondrous adventures, or his wife and

daughters in listening to them with open mouths, uplifted hands, and occasional breathless ejaculations of "Good Lord, look down!" "Oh! go away!" or, "Shut up!" "You don't ses so!"

Early in the fall of 18—, Farmer Wilkins announced to his son Peter, that as he, "his daddy," would be too busy to make the usual trip in *propria persona*, he, Peter, must get ready to go down to Augusty, and sell the "first load." Now Peter Wilkins, jun., a young man just grown, was one of the celebrities of which his settle*ment* (neighbourhood) boasted. He was supposed to have cut his eye-teeth—to have shaken off that verdancy so common to young men; and while he filled up more than half his father's capacious heart, to the discomfiture of Mahaly (his mother), and Suke and Poll (his sisters), he was the pet and darling of the whole neighbourhood. An only son, the old man doted upon him as a chip of the old block, and was confident that Peter, in any emergency of trade, traffic, or otherwise, would display that admirable tact, and that attentive consideration for "No. One," for which Mr. P. Wilkins, sen., was noted. A horse-swap with a Yankee, in which Peter, after half an hour's higgling, found himself the undis-

puted owner of both horses and ten dollars boot, was the corner-stone of his fame. Every trip to Augusta added another block; and by the time Peter arrived at the years of discretion, he stood upon a lofty structure with all the green rubbed off, the pride of his family and the universal favourite of his acquaintances.

The night before his departure the family were all gathered around the roaring fire, Mrs. and the Misses Wilkins engaged in ironing and mending our hero's Sunday apparel, the old man smoking his pipe, and occasionally preparing Peter for the ordeal in Augusta, by wholesome advice, or testing his claim to the tremendous confidence about to be reposed in him, by searching questions, as to how he would do in case so-and-so was to turn up. To this counsel, however, our hero paid less attention than to the preparations making around him for his comely appearance in the city. Nor, until he got upon the road, did he revolve in his mind the numerous directions of his father, or resolve to follow to the letter his solemn parting injunction to "bewar of them gimblit fellers down to Augusty."

"Durn it," said he to himself, as the thought of

being "sold" crossed his mind, "durn it, they'll never make gourds out o' me. *I've* bin to Augusty *before*, and ef I don't git as much fur that thur cotton as anybody else does for thurn, then my name ain't Peter Wilkins, and that's what the old 'oman's slam book says it is."

Arrived in the city, he drove around to one of the warehouses, and stood against the brick wall, awaiting a purchaser. Presently a little man with a long gimblet in his hand came out, and bade our hero a polite "Good morning."

"Mornin'," said Peter, with admirable coolness, as he deliberately surveyed the little man from head to foot, and withdrew his eyes as if not pleased with his appearance.

The little man was dressed in the "shabby-genteel" style, a costume much in vogue at that day among men of his cloth, as combining plainness enough for the country-folk, with sufficient gentility to keep them on speaking terms with the more fashionable denizens of the then metropolis. The little man seemed in no way disconcerted by Peter's searching gaze, and a close observer might have perceived a slight smile on his lip, as he read the thoughts of our hero's bosom. His self-confidence,

his pride, his affected ease and knowing air, were all comprehended, and ere a word had passed the lion knew well the character of his prey. In the purchase of the cotton, however, the little man sought no advantage, and even offered our hero a better price than any one else in the city would have given him. To our hero's credit, be it said, he was not loth to accept the offer; 15½ cents was above the market, by at least a quarter, and the old man had told him to let it slide at fifteen rather than not sell, so the bargain was closed, and our hero and the "Gimblit-man" went out into the yard to settle.

Seating himself on a cotton-bale, the buyer counted out the money, which our hero made safe in his pocket, after seeing that it was "*giniwine*," and tallied with the amount stated in the bill of sale. A few sweet pills of flattery administered to our hero, soon made him and the Gimblit-man sworn friends; and it was in consideration of his high regard, that the Gimblit-man consented to initiate him into the mysteries of a certain game, yclept "Thimble Rig," a game which, our hero was told, would yield him much sport, if successfully played up at home among the boys; and

would, when properly managed, be to him a never-failing source of that desirable article, "pocket-change." To this proposition our hero readily assented, delighted with the idea of playing off upon the boys up at home, who hadn't been to Augusty; and already began to revel in the visions of full pockets, when, to his silent horror, the little man took from his pocket a hundred-dollar bill, and very irreverently rolled it into a small round ball.

Three thimbles were next produced, and the game began.

"Now," said the little man, "I am going to hide this little ball under one of these thimbles, all before your eyes, and I want you to guess where it is."

"Well," said Peter, "go it—I'm ready," and the shifting game begun.

To the apparent astonishment of the little man, our hero guessed right every time. No matter how rapid the changes, Peter invariably lifted the thimble from the ball, and had begun to grow disgusted with the game, little dreaming how soon he was to prove its efficacy as a source of revenue, when the little man suddenly checked his hand.

"Wrong," said he, with a friendly smile; "the ball is not under the middle thimble, but under that next you."

"Darned ef it is though!" responded Peter; "I ain't as green as you 'Gusty folks thinks. Blamed ef I don't know whar that ball is jist as well as you does, and dod-drapped ef I don't bet four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents (the price of the cotton) agin the load o' cotton, that it's under the middle thimble."

"No, *Sir*," said the little man, with another smile, "you are wrong, and I'd hate to win your money."

That smile deceived Peter—it manifested a friendly consideration for his welfare, which he felt he did not need, and after bullying the "Gimblit-man" for a few minutes, he succeeded in inveigling him (as he thought) into a bet, which was duly closed and sealed, to the entire satisfaction of his *friend!* Alas for poor Peter! he had awakened the wrong passenger. But the idea of being too smart for an Augusty feller, and he was sure he had cornered one this time, was too great a temptation for him to withstand.

"Drot it," said he to himself, "I seen him put

it under that ere middle thimble, I seen it myself, and I know it's thar, and why not win the old man's cotton back when it's jest as easy as nothin'? And ef I do win it, why in course the old man can't claim more'n four hundred and fifty-one dollars no how." (Peter forgot that the profits to be realized ought of course to belong to the owner of the capital invested.) "The time me and that Yankee swapped critters, warn't I thar? Hain't I cut my gums? Don't the old man, yes, and all the settle*ment*, say I'm smart, and then thar's Kitty Brown, I reckon she ort to know, and don't she say I'm the peertest feller in our parts? *I've* bin to Augusty, and this time, dod-drapped ef I don't leave my mark."

The result we need hardly relate. Peter was tempted—tempted sorely, and he fell. Sick at heart, he ordered Bob, the driver, to turn his mules homeward, and late on Saturday evening he entered the lane which led to his father's house. The blow was now to come; and some time before the waggon got to the house, Peter saw his father, and mother, and sisters coming out to meet him. At last they met.

"Well, son," said the old man, "I s'pose you've been well?"

Here Mrs. Wilkins and the gals commenced hugging and kissing Peter, which he took very coldly, and with the air of a man who felt he was getting a favour which he didn't deserve.

"Reasonably well," said Peter, in reply to his father's question; "but I've lost it."

"Lost what?" said his father.

"Lost *it*."

"Lost the dockyments?" said the old man.

"No, here they are," said Peter, handing the papers containing the weights of his cotton, to his father, who began to read, partly aloud, and partly to himself:

"'Eight bags of cotton—350—400—348——550—317—15½ cents a pound—sold to Jonathan Barker.' Very good sale," said he; "I knowed you'd fix things rite, Peter."

The waggon by this time had reached the house, and turning to Bob, the old man told him to put the molasses in the cellar, and the sugar and coffee in the house.

"Ain't got no 'lasses, Massa," said Bob, grinning from ear to ear.

"No," said Peter, "we havn't got none; we lost it."

"Lost it! How on airth could you lose a barrel of molasses?"

"We never had it," said Bob.

"Heavens and airth!" said the old man, turning first to Bob, and then to Peter, "what do you mean? What do you mean? *What, what,* w-h-a-t in the d-e-v-i-l *do* you mean?"

"Gracious, Marster! Mr. Wilkins, don't swar, so," said his wife, by way of helping Peter out.

"*Swar!*" said the farmer, "do you call *that* swarring? Darned ef I don't say wussin that d'recley, ef they don't tell me what they mean."

"Why, father," said Peter, "I've lost it. I've lost the money."

"Well, and couldn't you find it?"

"I didn't lose it that way," said Peter.

"You ain't been a gamblin' I hopes," said the old man; "you ain't been runnin' agin none of them Pharo banks down to Augusty, is you?"

"Bring me three thimbles," said Peter, "and I'll show you how I lost it."

The thimbles were brought, and Peter sat down

to explain. It was a scene for a painter: there sat our hero, fumbling with the thimbles and the ball, but too much frightened to have performed the trick if he had known how; his father sat next him, with his chin upon his hands, looking as if undecided whether to reprimand him at once, or to give him a "fair showin'." Mrs. Wilkins stood just behind her husband, winking and smiling, gesturing and hemming, in order to attract Peter's attention, and indicate to him her willingness to stand between him and his father. The girls, who always sided with their mother, followed her example in this case. But their efforts to attract his attention were useless; they could not even catch his eye, so busy was he in trying to arrange the ball and thimbles; but every time he got them fixed, and told his father to guess, the old man would guess right, which, while it astonished Peter, incensed the old man against him. It looked so easy to him, that he could not help "blaming Pete fur bein' sich a fool."

"Shorely," said the farmer, after Peter had finished his explanation—"shorely it ain't *possible* that you've bin to Augusty *so often*, and didn't know no better. Didn't I tell you not to have

nothin' to do with them *Gimblit Fellers?* Ther ain't one of 'em honest, not one. Like a fool, you've gone and lost jest four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents. It ain't the munny that I keers for, Peter, it's you bein' sich a fool—*four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents.* I'll go rite down to Augusty next Monday, and find this here Barker, and ef he don't give up the munny, I'll have a *say so* (ca. sa.) taken agin him, and march him rite off to gaol—no deaf-allication about that. The theavin' rascal, gwine about cheetin' people's sons outin four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents? How often is you bin to Augusty, Peter?"

"Sixteen times," said Peter.

"Well, I declare," said the old man; "bin to Augusty sixteen times, and didn't know no better than to go thar agin and lose four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents!"

Early on Monday morning the old man started to Augusta with another load of cotton; Bob driving as before, and his master riding his gray mare "Bets." Mr. Wilkins had a great many little commissions to execute for his wife and the *gals.* The old lady wanted a pair of spectacles, and the gals a bonnet each—ribbons and flowers,

thread, buttons, &c., had to be purchased, and the good farmer was nearly crazed by the loss he had met with, and the multiplicity of things to be attended to. Ever and anon, as he trotted along the road, he would mutter to himself something as follows:

"Leghorn bonnet for Sal—12 skeins of flax thread—2 dozen pearl buttons for pants—one gross horn buttons for shirts—5 grass petticoats—100 pounds coffee—451 dollars no cents—Jonathan Barker—bin to Augusty sixteen times—1 bolt kaliker—Pete's a fool—lost one barrel of molasses and 451 dollars no cents."

With such words as these he would while away the time, apparently unconscious of the presence of Bob, who was much diverted by his master's soliloquy. As they approached Augusta, his wrath seemed to increase, and he vented his spleen on his old mare and Bob.

"Bob," said he, "you dad-dratted rascal, why don't you drive up? you don't do nothin' but set thar and sleep.

"Take *that*, and *that*, and *that*," he would say to his mare, accompanying each word with a blow; "*git up, Miss, and go long to Augusty.*"

When they had come in sight of Augusta, Bob struck a camp, and his master rode on into town. Having eaten his supper, and put up his horse, he retired for the night, and early in the morning started out to look for Jonathan Barker. He caused not a little laughter as he walked along the streets, relating his troubles, and inquiring of everybody for Jonathan Barker.

"Where's Jonathan Barker," he would cry out, "the Gimblit Feller what cheeted Pete out'n 451 dollars no cents. Jes show me Jonathan Barker."

As a last hope, he went around to the warehouse, where his son had lost the cotton. Walking out into the yard, he bawled out the name of Jonathan Barker. A little man, with a long gimlet in his hand, answered to the name, and our farmer attacked him as follows:

"Look a here, Mr. Barker, I wants that money."

"What money?" said Barker, who had no acquaintance whatever with the farmer; "what money is it, Sir?"

"Oh no," said the old man, perfectly furious at such barefaced assurance. "Oh no! you don't know

nuthin now. Blame your picter, you're as innersent as a lam'. Don't know what munny I *meen?* It's that four hundred and fifty-one dollars, and *no* cents, what you cheeted Pete out'n."

"I recollect now," said Barker, "that was fairly done, Sir; if you'll just step this way, I'll show you how I got it, Sir."

A bright idea struck the old man.

"I've seen Pete play it," thought he to himself, "and I guessed *rite every time.*

"Well," said he, "I'll go and see how it was dun, ennyhow."

The two walked along to the same bale of cotton which had witnessed the game before, and the gimlet man took the identical thimbles and ball which had served him before, from his pocket, and sat down, requesting the farmer to be seated also.

"Now, Sir," said Barker, "when your son was here, I bought his cotton, and paid him for it: just as he was going away, I proposed showing him a trick worth seeing. I took this little ball, and put it under this middle thimble.

"'Now,' said I to him, 'you see it, and now you

don't see it; and I'll bet you you can't tell where the little joker is.'"

"Well," said the farmer, "all's rite—the ball's now under the middle thimble."

"When I had put it under there," continued Barker, "your son wanted to bet me that it was under the middle thimble."

"So it is," said the old man, interrupting him.

"No," returned Barker, "it's under the one next you."

"I tell you it ain't," said Mr. Wilkins, who strongly advocated the doctrine that "seeing is believing."

He was sure he was right, and now a chance presented itself of regaining his former load of cotton.

"I tell you it ain't. I'm harder to head than Pete wus, and blamed ef I don't bet another load o' cotton, that's at the dore by this time."

"You are mistaken," said Barker, smiling; "but if you wish it, I'll bet."

"Let's understand one nuther fust,". said the farmer. "You say that ere little ball you had jes now, ain't under the little thimble in the middle—I

say it is. Ef it ain't, I'm to give you the load o' cotton—ef it is, you're to give me four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents."

"Exactly so," said Barker.

"Well, I'll bet," said the farmer, "and here's my hand."

The bet was sealed, and with a triumphant air which he but poorly concealed, the farmer snatched up the middle thimble, but no ball was there.

"Well, I'll be dod drapt!" he exclaimed, at the same time drawing a long breath, and dropping the thimble. "Derned ef it's *thar!* Four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents gone *agin!* Heven and airth, what'll Mahaly and the gals say! I'll never heer the eend of it tel I'm in my grave. Then thar's Pete! *Gee-mi-my! jest* to think o' Pete—fur *him* to know his ole daddy wus made a fool of too! four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents! but I wouldn't keer *that* for it," snapping his fingers, "ef it wern't fur Pete."

The Gimblit man reminded our friend of the result of his bet, by telling him that the sooner he unloaded the better.

"Now you ain't, shore nuff, in *yearnest,*" said the old man.

"Dead earnest," returned Barker.

"Well, stranger," added our friend, "I'se a honest man, and stands squar up to my contracts."

With this he had his cargo discharged into the street, and ordering Bob to drive on, he mounted his mare, and set out for home with a heavier heart than he had ever known before. 'Twere useless to attempt a description of the scene which transpired on the farmer's return home. The first words he uttered were, "Pete, durned ef I hain't lost it too." The misfortunes of his trip were soon all told, after which Peter and his father wisely resolved never to bet on anything again, especially "them blamed Yankee Thimbles."

It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Wilkins, Pete, or the gals, could help teasing the old man occasionally on the result of his trip. Whenever he became refractory, his wife would stick her thimble on the end on her finger, and hold it up for him to look at—it acted like a charm. His misadventure, too, raised higher than ever his opinion of the cunning and sagacity of "*them Augusty fellers!*"

A few years succeeding the events which we have attempted to narrate, and Farmer Wilkins was

gathered to his fathers; but his trip to Augusta is still preserved as a warning to all honest and simple-hearted people. The last words of the old man to his son were:

"Peter, Peter, my son, always be honest, never forgit your ole daddy, and *allers bewar* of them Gimblit fellers, *down to Augusty.*"

Reader! every tale has its moral, nor is ours without one. Not only did Peter learn from his adventure in Augusta, the evils of betting, but ever since the time to which we have alluded, he always allows his factor to sell his cotton for him. Whatever you may think of it, both Peter and his father came to the conclusion that there was "no use in tryin' to git the upper hand of one o' them *Gimblet fellers down to Augusty.*"

II.

MIKE HOOTER'S BAR STORY.

A YAZOO SKETCH.

SHOWING HOW THE BEAR OUTWITTED IKE HAMBERLIN.

BY A MISSOURIAN.

"It's no use talkin'," said Mike, "'bout your Polar Bar, and your Grisly Bar, and all that sort er varmont what you read about. They ain't no whar, for the big black customer that circumlocutes down in our neck o' woods beats 'em all hollow. I've heard of some monsus explites kicked up by the brown bars, sich as totein off a yoke o' oxen, and eatin' humans raw, and all that kind o' thing; and Capten Parry tells us a yarn 'bout a big white bar,

what 'muses hisself climin' up the North Pole and slides down to keep his hide warm; but all that ain't a circumstance to what I've saw.

"You see," continued Mike, "there's no countin' on them varmonts as I's been usened to, for they comes as near bein' human critters as anything I ever see what doesn't talk. Why, if you was to hear anybody else tell 'bout the bar-fights I've had, you wouldn't b'leeve 'em, and if I wasn't a preacher, and could not lie none, I'd keep my fly-trap shot 'tell the day of judgment.

"I've heard folks say as how bars cannot think like other human critters, and that they does all the sly tricks what they does, from instink. Golly! what a lie! You tell me one of 'em don't know when you've got a gun, and when you ain't? Just wait a minit, an' my privit 'pinion is, when you've hearn me thro' you'll talk t'other side of your mouth.

"You see, one day, long time ago, 'fore britches come in fashion, I made a 'pointment with Ike Hamberlin the steam doctor, to go out next Sunday to seek whom we couldn't kill, a bar, for you know bacon was skace, and so was money, and them fellers down in Mechanicsburg wouldn't sell on tick, so we had to 'pend on the varmints for a livin'.

"Speakin' of Mechanicsburg, the people down in that ar mud-hole ain't to be beat nowhere this side o' Christmas. I've hearn o' mean folks in my time, an' I've preached 'bout 'em a few; but ever sense that feller, Bonnel, sold me a pint of red eye-whiskey—'an half ov it backer juice—for a 'coon-skin, an' then guv me me a brass picayune fur change, I've stopped talkin'. Why, that chap was closer than the bark on a hickory tree; an' ef I hadn't hearn Parson Dilly say so, I'd ov swore it wasn't er fact, he was cotch one day stealin' acorns from a blind hog. Did you ever hear how that hoss-fly died? Well, never mind. It was too bad to talk 'bout, but heap too good for him.

"But that ain't what I was spoutin' 'bout. As I was sayin' afore, we had to 'pend on the varmints fur a livin'. Well, Ike Hamberlin, you see, was always sorter jubous o' me, kase I kilt more bar nor he did; an', as I was sayin', I made a 'pointment with Ike to go out huntin'. Then, Ike, he thought he'd be kinder smart, and beat 'Old Preach' (as them Cole boys usen to call me), so, as soon as day crack he hollered up his puppies, an' put! I spied what he was 'bout, fur I hearn him laffin' to one o' his niggers 'bout it the night afore—so, I told my

gal Sal to fill my private tickler full o' the old 'raw,' and then fixed up an' tramped on arter him, but didn't take none o' my dogs.

"Ike hadn't got fur into the cane, 'fore the dogs they 'gan to whine an' turn up the har on ther backs; an', bime-by, they all tucked tail, an' sorter sidled back to war he was stanin'. 'Sick him!' says Ike, but the cussed critters wouldn't hunt a lick. I soon diskivered what was the matter, for I kalkilated them curs o' hisn wasn't worth shucks in a bar fight—so, I know'd thar was bar 'bout, if I didn't see no sine.

"Well, Ike he coaxed the dogs, an' the more he coaxed the more they wouldn't go, an' when he found coaxin' wouldn't do, then he scolded and called 'em some of the hardest names ever you hearn, but the tarnation critters wouldn't budge a peg.

"When he found they wouldn't hunt no how he could fix it, he begin a cussin'. He didn't know I was thar. If he had er suspicioned it, he'd no more swore than he'd dar'd to kiss my Sal on er washin' day; for you see both on us belonged to the same church, and Ike was class-leader. I thought I should er flummuxed! The dogs they

sidled back, an' Ike he cussed; an' I lay down an' rolled an' laughed sorter easy to myself, 'til I was so full I thort I should er bust my biler. I never see ennything so funny in all my life! There was I layin' down behind er log, fit to split, an' there was the dogs with their tails the wrong eend down, and there was Ike a rarin' an' er pitchin'—er rippin' an' er tarrin'—an' er cussin' wus nor a steamboat cap'n! I tell you it fairly made my har stan' on eend. I never see er customer so riled afore in all my born days. Yes I did too, once—only once. It was that feller Arch Coony, what used to oversee for old Ben Roach. Didn't you know that ar' hossfly? He's a few! well he is. Jewhilliken, how he could whip er nigger! and swar! whew! Didn't you ever hear him swar? I tell you, all the sailors and French parrots in Orleans ain't a patchin' to him. I hearn him let hisself out one day, and he was a caution to sinners, an' what was wus, it was all 'bout nothin', for he warn't mad a wrinkle. But all that ain't neither here nor thar.

"But, as I was sayin' afore, the dogs they smelt bar sine, an' wouldn't budge a peg, an arter Ike had almost cussed the bark off'n a dog-wood saplin'

by, he lent his old flint-lock rifle up agin it, and then he pealed off his old blanket an' laid her down, too. I diskivered mischief was er cumin', for I never see a critter show rathy like he did. Torectly I see him walk down to the creek bottom, 'bout fifty yards from where his gun was, and then he 'gin pickin' up rocks an' slingin' um at the dogs like bringer! Cracky! didn't he linkit into um? It minded me of David whalin' Goliah, it did! If you'd er seed him, and hearn them holler, you'd er thought he'd er knocked the nigh sites off'n every mother's son of 'em!

"But that ain't the fun yet. While Ike was er lammin' the dogs, I hearn the allfiredest crackin' in the cane, an' I looked up, and thar was one of the eternalist whollopin' bars cummin' crack, crack, through the cane an' kerslesh over the creek, and stopped right plumb slap up whar Ike's gun was. Torectly he tuck hold er the ole shooter, an' I thought I see him tinkerin' 'bout the lock, an' kinder whistlin', and blowin' into it. I was 'stonished, I tell you, but I wanted to see Ike outdone so bad that I lay low and kep' dark, an' in about a minit Ike got done lickin' the dogs, an' went to git his gun. Jeemeny, criminy! if you'd

only been whar I was! I do think Ike was the maddest man that ever stuk an axe into a tree, for his har stuck rite strait up, and his eyes glared like two dogwood blossoms! But the bar did'nt seem to care shucks for him, for he jist sot the old rifle rite back agin the saplin', and walked off on his hind legs jist like any human. Then, you see, I gin to git sorter jelus, and sez I to myself, 'Mister Bar,' sez I, 'the place whar you's er stanin' ain't prezactly healthy, an' if you don't wabble off from thar purty soon, Mizis Bar will be a widder, by gum!' With that, Ike grabbed up ole Mizis Rifle, and tuk most pertickler aim at him, and by hokey, she snapped! Now, sez I, 'Mister Bar, go it, or he'll make bacon of you!' But the varmint didn't wink, but stood still as a post, with the thumb of his right paw on the eend of his smeller, and wiglin' his t'other finger thus," (and Mike went through with the gyration). "All this time Ike he stood thar like a fool, er snappin' and her snappin', an' the bar he lookin' kinder quare like, out er the corner o' his eye, an' sorter laffin' at him. Torectly I see Ike take down the ole shooter, an' kinder kersamine the lock, an' when he done that, he laid her on his shoulder, and

shook his fist at the bar, and walked toward home, an' the bar he shuk his fist, an' went into the cane brake, and then I cum off."

Here all the Yazoo boys expressed great anxiety to know the reason why Ike's gun didn't fire.

"Let's licker fust," said Mik, "an' if you don't caterpillar, you can shoot me. Why, you see," concluded he, "the long and short of it is this, that the bar in our neck o' woods has a little human in um, and this feller know'd as much about a gun as I do 'bout preachin'; so when Ike was lickin' the dogs, he jest blowed all the powder outen the pan, an' to make all safe, he tuk the flint out too, and that's the way he warn't skeered when Ike was snappin' at him."

III.

COUSIN GUSS.*

"WELL, how de dew? I'm right glad to see you, I swow. I rather guess I can say suthin' about the *Revolution* business, purty good varsion, tew, by jingo. My father, old Josh Addams, had his fist in it: any on you know him? Old Josh Addams, as well known as the Schuylkill water-works. He was born in Boston: he didn't die there, 'cause he died in Philadelphia. He used to wear an old genuine '76 coat, little cut down to suit the fashion, made it a razee. One might have known the old man a mile off. If it hadn't been for Cousin Guss, he'd

* By G. H. Hill.

have been livin' to this ere day. You may see Guss in Chestnut Street—any of you know him?—dressed like a peacock, and got whiskers big enough to stuff a sofa bottom. He went down t'other day to see the wild beasts in 5th street; jest as he was comin' away, he met a hull squad of little children a comin' in: when they saw Cousin Guss, if they didn't squeal like ten thousand devils. The old man says, what's the matter, young ones? Oh dear, papa, see, they've let one of the monkeys loose. Cousin Guss didn't show his face in Chestnut Street for a week. Guss telled the old man he must have his coat cut again, and altered to the fashion; so he coaxed old Josh to let him take it down to his artist, as he called him, down in 3rd street. Well, the good-natured old critter said he might: when he got it back, sich a lookin' thing as it was, you might have fallen down and worshipped it, without breaking the ten commandments. When we saw it, we all larfed; sister Jedide, she snickered right out. The old man looked at it for about a minute, didn't say a word, by jingo—the tears rolled out of his eyes as big as hail-stones. He jest folded it up, put it under his pillow, laid himself down on the bed, and never got up again: it broke his heart: he died from a curtailed coat.

"The old man used to tell sich stories about the Revolution. I rather guess he could say a leetle more about that affair than most folks. 'Bout six years ago he went to Boston, when La Fayette was there; they gave a great dinner at Fanueil Hall. When the Mayor heard old Josh Addams was in Boston, he sent him a regular built invitation. The old man went, and wore the '76 coat,—that is, before it was cut down, though. By-and-by they called upon the old man for a toast. Up he got, and, says he:

"'Here's to the Heroes of the Revolution, who fought, bled, and died for their country, of which I was one.'

"When old Josh said that, they all snickered right out.

"There's one story the old man used to tell about Boston, that was a real snorter: he always used to laugh afore he begun.

"He said, down on Long Wharf there was a queer little feller—a cousin of his by the mother's side—called Zedekiah Hales, who wasn't more than four foot high, and had a hump jest between his shoulders. A hull squad of British officers got round Zedekiah, in State Street, and were laughing and poking all sorts of fun at him: he bore it,

cause as how he couldn't help it; one of them, a regular built dandy captain, lifting up his glass, said to him:

"'You horrid little deformed critter, what's that lump you've got on your shoulder?'

"Zedekiah turned round and looked at him for about a minute, and says he:

"'It's *Bunker Hill*, you tarnal fool, you.'"

IV.

THE GANDER-PULLING.

In the year ——, I resided in the city of Augusta, and upon visiting the Market-House one morning in that year, my attention was called to the following notice stuck upon one of the pillars of the building:

"ADVURTYSEMENT.

"Thos woo wish To be inform hearof, is hearof notyfide that edwd. Prator will Giv a Gander pullin', jis this side of harisburg, on Satterday of thes present munth, to All woo mout wish to partak tharof.

"e. Prator—thos wishin' to partak will cum yearly, as the pullin' will begin Soon.—E. P."

If I am asked why "jis this side of harisburg" was selected for the promised feat, instead of the city of Augusta? I answer from conjecture, but with some confidence, because the ground chosen was near the central point between four rival towns, the citizens of all which "mout wish to partak tharof," namely, Augusta, Springfield, Harrisburg, and Campbelltown. Not that each was the rival of all the others, but that the first and last were competitors, and each of the others backed the pretensions of its nearest neighbour.

Harrisburg sided with Campbelltown, *not because she had any interest in seeing the business of the two states centre upon the bank of the river, nearly opposite to her,* but because, like the "Union democratic republican party of Georgia," she thought, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, that the several towns of the confederacy should no longer be "separated" by the distinction of local party; that laying down all former prejudices and jealousies as a sacrifice on the altar of their country, they should become united in a single body, for the maintenance of those principles which they deemed essential to the public welfare.

Springfield, on the other hand, espoused the state

rights' creed. She admitted that, under the federal compact, she ought to love the sister states very much; but that, under the social compact, she ought to love her own state a little more; and she thought the two compacts perfectly reconcilable to each other. Instead of the towns of the several states getting into single bodies to preserve the public welfare, her doctrine was, that they should be kept in separate bodies to preserve the private welfare. She admitted frankly, that living as she had always lived, right amidst gullies, vapours, fogs, creeks and lagoons, she was wholly incapable of comprehending that expansive kind of benevolence which taught her to love people whom she knew nothing about, as much as her next door neighbours and friends. Until, therefore, she could learn it from the practical operation of the federal compact, she would stick to the old-fashioned Scotch love, which she understood perfectly, and "go in" for Augusta, live or die, hit or miss, right or wrong.

As in the days of Mr. Jefferson, the Springfield doctrines prevailed, Campbelltown was literally *nullified:* insomuch, that ten years ago there was not a house left to mark the spot where once flourished this active, busy little village.

Those who are curious to know where Springfield stood, at the time of which I am speaking, have only to take their position at the intersection of Broad and Manbury Streets, in the city of Augusta, and they will be in the very heart of old Springfield.

Between Harrisburg and Springfield, and eleven hundred and forty-three yards from the latter, there runs a stream which may be perpetual. At the time just mentioned, it flowed between banks twelve or fourteen feet high, and was then called, as it still is, "Hawk's Gully."

Now Mr. Prator, like the most successful politician of the present day, was on all sides in a doubtful contest; and accordingly he laid off his gander-pulling ground on the nearest suitable unappropriated spot to the centre point between Springfield and Harrisburg. This was between Harrisburg and Hawk's Gully, but within one hundred yards of Harrisburg.

When "Satterday of the pressent munth" rolled round, I determined to go to the gander-pulling. When I reached the spot, a considerable number of persons of different ages, sexes, sizes, and complexions, had collected from the rival towns, and the

country around. But few females were there, however, and those few were from the lowest walks of life.

A circular path, of about forty yards in diameter, had already been laid out; over which, from two posts about ten feet apart, stretched a rope, the middle of which was directly over the path. The rope hung loosely, so as to allow it, with the weight of a gander attached to it, to vibrate in an arc of four or five feet span, and so as to bring the breast of the gander within barely easy reach of a man of middle stature, upon a horse of common size.

A hat was now handed to such as wished to enter the lists, and they threw into it twenty-five cents each; this sum was the victor's prize.

The devoted gander was now produced; and Mr. Prator having tied his feet together with a strong cord, proceeded to the *neck-greasing*. Abhorrent as it may be to all who respect the tenderer relations of life, Mrs. Prator had actually prepared a gourd of *goose-grease* for this very purpose.

For myself, when I saw Ned dip his hands into it, and commence stroking down the feathers, from breast to head, my thoughts took a melancholy

turn. They dwelt in sadness upon the many conjugal felicities which had probably been shared between the greasess and the grease. I could see him, as he stood by her side, through many a chilly day, and cheerless night, when she was warming into life the offspring of their mutual loves, and repelled, with chivalrous spirit, every invasion of the consecrated spot which she had selected for her incubation. I could see him moving, with patriarchal dignity, by the side of his loved one, at the head of a smiling, prattling group, the rich reward of their mutual care, to the luxuries of the meadow, or the recreations of the pool. And now, alas! the smoking sacrifice of his bosom friend was desecrated to the unholy purpose of making his neck "a fit object" for Cruelty to reach "her quick, unerring fingers at."

Ye friends of the sacred tie, judge what were my feelings when, in the midst of these reflections, the voice of James Prator thundered on mine ear:

"Durn the old dodger, Brother Ned! Grease his neck, till a fly can't light on it!"

Ned having fulfilled his brother Jim's request as well as he could, attached the victim of his cruelty

to the rope, directly over the path. On each side of the gander was stationed a man, whose office it was to lash forward any horse which might linger there for a moment; for by the rules of the ring, all pulling was to be done at a brisk canter.

The word was now given for the competitors to mount and take their places in the ring. Eight appeared: Tall Zubly Zin, mounted upon Sally Spitfire; Arch Odum, on Bull and Ingons (Onions); Nathan Perdew, on Wild Cat; James Dickson, on Nigger; David Williams, on Gridiron; fat John Fulger, on Slouch; Gorham Bostwick, on Gimblet; and Turner Hammond, on Possum.

"Come, gentlemen," said Commandant Prator, "fall in! All of you get behind one another, sort o' in a row."

All came into the track very kindly, but Sally Spitfire and Gridiron. The former, as soon as she saw a general movement of horses, took it for granted there was mischief brewing; and because she could not tell where it lay, she concluded it lay everywhere, and therefore took fright at everything.

Gridiron was a grave horse; but a suspicious eye,

which he cast to the right and left wherever he moved, showed that he was "wide awake," and that "nobody had better not go fooling with him," as his owner sometimes used to say. He took a sober, but rather intense view of things; insomuch that, in his contemplations, he passed over his track three times, before he could be prevailed upon to stop upon it. He stopped at last, and when he was made to understand that this was all that was expected of him for the present, he surrendered his suspicions at once, with a countenance which seemed plainly to say:

"Oh, if this is all you want, I've no objection to it."

It was long before Miss Spitfire could be induced to do the like.

"Get another horse, Zube," said one; "Sall will never do for a gander pullin'."

"I won't," said Zube. "If she won't do, I'll make her do. I want a nag that goes off with a spring, so that when I get a hold, she'll cut the neck in two, like a steel trap."

At length Sally was rather flung, than coaxed, into the track, directly a-head of Gridiron.

"Now, gentlemen," said the master of the cere-

monies, "no man's to make a grab till all's been round; and when the first man *are* got round, then the whole twist and tucking off you grab away, as you come under (Look here, Jim Fulger, you'd better not stand too close to that gander, I tell you!), one after another. Now blaze away!" (the command for an onset of every kind, with people of this order.)

Off they went, Miss Sally delighted; for now she thought the whole parade would end in nothing more nor less than her favourite amusement, a race. But Gridiron's visage, pronounced this the most nonsensical business that ever a horse of sense was engaged in since the world began.

For the first three rounds Zubly was wholly occupied in restraining Sally to her place; but he lost nothing by this, for the gander had escaped unhurt. On completing his third round, Zube stretched forth his long arm, grabbed the gander by the neck, with a firmness which seemed likely to defy *goose-grease*, and at the same instant, he involuntarily gave Sally a sudden check. She raised her head, which had been kept nearly touching her leader's hocks; and for the first time, saw the gander in the act of descending upon her; at

the same moment she received two pealing lashes from the whippers. The way she now broke for Springfield "is nothin' to nobody." As Zube dashed down the road, the whole circus raised a whoop after him. This started about twenty dogs, hounds, curs, and pointers in full chase of him (for no man moved without his dog in those days). The dogs alarmed some belled cattle, which were grazing on Zube's path, just as he reached them; these joined him, with tails up, and a tremendous rattling. Just beyond these went three tobacco-rollers, at a distance of fifty and a hundred yards apart, each of whom gave Zube a terrific whoop, scream, or yell, as he passed.

He went in and out of Hawk's Gully like a trap-ball, and was in Springfield "in less than no time." Here he was encouraged onward by a new recruit of dogs, but they gave up the chase as hopeless before they cleared the village. Just beyond Springfield, what should Sally encounter but a flock of geese, the tribe to which she owed all her misfortunes.

She stopped suddenly, and Zube went over her head with the last-acquired velocity. He was up in a moment, and the activity with which he

pursued Sally satisfied every spectator that he was unhurt.

Gridiron, who had witnessed Miss Sally's treatment with astonishment and indignation, resolved not to pass between the posts until the whole matter should be explained to his satisfaction. He therefore stopped short, and by very intelligible looks, demanded of the whippers, whether, if he passed between them, he was to be treated as Miss Spitfire had been. The whippers gave him no satisfaction, and his rider informed him by reiterated thumps of the heel that he should go through, whether he would or not. Of these, however, Gridiron seemed to know nothing. In the midst of the conference, Gridiron's eye lit upon the oscillating gander, and every moment's survey of it begat in him a growing interest, as his slowly rising head, suppressed breath, and projected ears plainly evinced. After a short examination, he heaved a sigh, and looked behind him to see if the way was clear. It was plain that his mind was made up: but to satisfy the world that he would do nothing rashly, he took another view, and then wheeled and went for Harrisburg, as if he had set in for a year's running. Nobody whooped at Gridiron, for all saw

that his running was purely the result of philosophic deduction. The reader will not suppose that this occupied half the time which has been consumed in telling it, though it might have been so, without interrupting the amusement, for Miss Spitfire's flight had completely suspended it for a time.

The remaining competitors now went on with the sport. A few rounds showed plainly that Odum or Bostwick would be the victor, but which no one could tell.

Whenever either of them came round, the gander's neck was sure of a severe wrench. Many a half pint of Jamaica was staked upon them, besides other things. The poor gander withstood many a strong pull before his wailings ceased. At length, however, they were hushed by Odum. Then came Bostwick and broke the neck. The next grasp of Odum, it was thought, would bear away the head, but it did not. Then Bostwick was sure of it, but he missed it. Now Odum must surely have it. All is interest and animation. The horses sweep round with redoubled speed—every eye is upon Odum—his backers smiling—Bostwick's trembling. To the rope he comes—lifts his hand—

when lo! Fat John Fulger had borne it away the second before. All were astonished—all disappointed, and some were vexed a little: for it was now clear, that, "if it hadn't o' been for his great fat paw," to use their own language, Odum would have gained the victory. Others inveighed against "that long-legged Zube Zin, who was so high, he did not know when his feet were cold, for bringing such a nag as Sall Spitfire to a gander-pullin'; for if he'd o' been in his place, it would have flung Bostwick right were that *gourd o' hogs' lard* (Fulger) was."

Fulger's conduct was little calculated to reconcile them to their disappointment.

"Come here, Neddy Prater," said he, with a triumphant smile, "let your Uncle Johnny put his *potato-stealer* (hand) into that hat, and tickle the chins of them are shiners a little. Oh you little shining critters, walk into your Mas' Johnny's pocket, and jingle so as Arch Odum and Gory Bostwick may hear you! You hear 'em, Gory? *Boys* don't pull with *men*. I've jist got my hand in; I wish I had a pond full of ganders here now, jist to show you how I could make their heads fly. Bet all I've won, you may hang three upon that rope, and I'll set Slouch at full speed and take off

the heads of all three, the first grab, two with my hands and one with my teeth."

Thus he went on, but really there was no boasting in this; it was all fun, for John knew, and all were convinced that he knew, that his success was entirely the result of accident. John was really a "good-natured fellow," and his *cavorting* had an effect directly opposite to that which the reader would suppose that it had—it reconciled all to their disappointment, save one. I except Billy Mixew of Spirit Creek, who had staked the net proceeds of six quarts of mukle-berries upon Odum, which he had been long keeping for a safe bet. He could not get reconciled, until he fretted himself into a pretty little piney-woods fight, in which he got whipt; and then he went home perfectly satisfied. Fulger spent all his winnings with Prater, in treats to the company—made most of them drunk, and thereby produced four Georgia *rotations*,* after which all parted good friends.

* I borrowed this term from Jim Inman, at the time: "Why, Jim," said I to him, just as he rose from a fight, "what have you been doing?" "Oh," said he, "nothing but taking a little *rotation* with Bob McManus."

V.

HOW MIKE HOOTER CAME VERY NEAR "WALLOPING" ARCH COONY.

In the Yazoo Hills, near the town of Sartartia, in the good State of Mississippi, there lived at no distant date one Mike Hooter, whose hunting and preaching adventures became famous in all the land. Besides being a great bear-hunter and hard to beat at preaching, Mike professed to be "considerable" of a fighter, and in a regular knock-down and drag-out row was hard to beat.

In order that the world may not remain in darkness as to his doings in this last behalf, and fearing lest there may be no one who entertains for him that

particularly warm regard which animates us towards him, we have thought it incumbent on us, in evidence of our attachment for the reverend hero, to jot down an instance that lingers in our memory respecting him, bequeathing it as a rich legacy to remotest time.

Entertaining such partiality, we may be pardoned for following Mike in one of his most stirring adventures, related in his peculiar and expressive vernacular.

"I'm one of the peaceablest fellers," said Mike, "that ever trotted on hind legs, and rather than git into er fuss 'bout nothin', I'd let er chap spit on me, but when it comes to rubbin' it in, I always in gen'rally kinder r'ars up an' won't stan' it.

"But there's some fellers up in Yazoo what would rather git into er scrimmage than eat; an I've seen er few up thar what war so hungry for er fight, that they fell away an' got so poor an' thin that they had to lean up agin er saplin' to cuss!

"That chap Arch Coony was er few in that line. He was the durndest, rantankerous hossfly that ever clum er tree! I'll tell you what, ef I hadn't er bin thar I wouldn't er b'leeved it: I seed him one day in Satartia git up from er jug of whiskey, when

he hadn't drunk morn'n half of it, and leave 'tother half to spile, and go an' pitch into er privit spoute 'twene two Injuns, when he didn't care er durn cent which walloped t'other, an' lamin' both on um out'n ther mockasins!

"Well, you see, Arch was mighty fond o' them kind a tricks, an' if he seed er fellow he thought he could lamm without no danger, he wouldn't make no bones, but he'd just go up to the chap and make faces at him, and harry his feelings er bit; and ef the fellow showed spunky like, he'd let him alone, an' ax him to take a drink; but if he sorter tried to sidle out of it, Arch would git as mad as all wrath, an' swar, an' cuss, an r'ar, an' charge like er ram at er gate-post; and the fust thing you knowed, he'd shuck off his coat, an' when the feller warn't spectin' nuthin', Arch would fetch him er side wipe on the head, and knock him into the middle of next week.

"You see I didn't like them sort of doings much, me, myself, I didn't; and I all'ays, ef ever I got er chance at Arch, I'd let him down a buttonhole or two. He was gittin' too high up in the pictures, enny how; and sez I one day, in er crowd, sez I:

"'Ef that feller Arch Coony don't mind which side of his bread's buttered, I'll git hold of him one of those days, an' I'll make him see sights.'

"Well, you see there was two or three sheep-stealing chaps listenin' to what I sed, an' they goes and tells Arch the fust chance I got I was gwine to larrup him. Well, that riled him like all fury, and as soon as he hearn it he begins er cussin' like wrath, and sez he:

"'Dod rot that ole Mike Hooter. He pertend to be a preacher. His preachin' ain't nothin' but loud hollerin' nohow."

"So you see them same chaps, they comes an' tells me what Arch had sed; an' I got mad too, an' we had the durndest rumpus in the neighbourhood you ever hearn.

"I didn't see nothing of Arch from that time till about er month. Every time I went down to Sartatia to buy ennything—er barrel of whiskey, or backer, or sich like truck, for privit use—I looked for Arch, an' Arch looked for me, but somehow or tother he never crossed my path.

"At last one day I sent him word I beleeved he was skeered of me, and the fust chance I got I would take the starch out'n him as sure as shooting; and

he sent word back to me that was a game two could play at, and when I wanted to try it, he'd see if he could'nt help me.

"Well, things went on that way for er long time, an' I didn't see nothing of Arch, so I begin to forgit all 'bout him. At last one day, when me and two or three other chaps was gwine down to Big Black River to go bar-hunting on t'other side of it, I hearn the darndest clatter-whacking, and noise in the road behind us; and when I turned round to see what in the name of thunder it was, thar was Arch and a whole lot of fellers cummin' down the road, er galloping full tilt right up to us, an' er gwine bar-huntin' too.

"When I seed him I was so mad I thought I should er burst myself.

"'Now, Mr. Arch, I've got you, and if you don't keep your eye skin'd, I'll lick you till your hide won't hold shucks.

"Toreckly, Arch he cum up alongside, and looked me right plum in the face as savage as er meat-axe; and sez he:

"'Good mornin' ole Preach, give us your paw.'

"I see thar was mischief in him as big as a meetin'-house, and I 'termined to give him as good

as he sent, so I looked at him sorter savigerous like, and sez I:

"'Look here, hoss, how can you have the face to talk to me, arter saying what you sed?'

"'Why,' sez he, 'Uncle Mike, didn't you begin it?'

"'No,' sez I; 'an' ef you sez I begun it I'll larrup you in er inch of your life.'

"Sez he, 'You eternal ole cuss, ef you want to larrup me, just larrup away as soon as you darn please, and we'll see which 'ill get the wust of it.'

"'Now,' sez I, 'I likes you, Arch, 'cause I all'ays thought you was a fust-rate feller; but ain't you been 'busin' me everywhere fur everything you could think of?'

"'Yes,' sez he, 'but didn't you say you'd git hold of me one of these days, and make me see sites?'

"'No,' sez I, 'I didn't: but this here's what I sed, sez I, ef that feller, Arch Cooney, don't mind which side of his bread's buttered, I'll get hold of him one of those days and make him see sites.'

"'Well,' sez he, 'Uncle Mike, you knows I'm the most peace'blest feller living, and always

mind which side of my bread's buttered, and ef that's all you sed, taint nothin'; so let's take er drink.'

"Then he tuck out er tickler of whiskey, and arter he'd tuck three or four swallers out'n it, sez he:

"'Uncle Mike, obleege me by taking er horn.'

"'No,' sez I, 'I won't do no such er dog on thing, for when I likes er chap, I likes him, and when I don't like him, I don't like him: but if you wants to fight, I'm your man.'

"You oughter seen Arch then, I think he was the most maddest man that ever wobbled on two 'hind legs.' He rar'd an' pitched, an' cussed an' swore like anything.

"When I see him cuttin' up that way, I commence getting mad, too, an' my knees they begin to shake, sorter like I had er chill, an' skeered—no, Sir—an' I s'posed thar was gwine to be thar devil to pay, I give you my word. I ain't been so wrathy before once since, and that was t'other day when that Cain, the blacksmith, drunk up my last bottle of 'bullface;' and when I tacked him 'bout it, sed he thought it was milk.

"But that ein't neither here, nor thar. As I was a sayin', Arch he cussed at me, an' I cussed at him, an' the fellers what was along of me sed I beat him all holler. Torectly I begin to get tired of jawin' away so much, and sez I:

"'Arch, what's the use of makin' such er all-fired rackit 'bout nothin'. S'pose we make it up?'

"'Good as wheat,' sez he.

"'Well,' sez I, 'give us your paw,' sez I, 'but,' sez I, 'thar's one thing you sed, what sorter sticks in my craw yet, an' if you don't pollogize, I'll wallop you for it right now.'

"'What does you mean?' sez he.

"Sez I, 'Didn't you sed one day that my preachin' warn't nothin' but loud hollerin'?'

"'Yes,' sez he, 'but didn't you send me word one time that you b'lieved I was skeered of you, an' the fust chance you got you'd take the starch out'n me, as sure as er gun.'

"Sez I, 'Yes, but what does that signify?'

"'Well,' sez he, 'ef you'll take back what you sed, I'll take back what I sed.'

"Then I begin to get as mad as all wrath, and, sez I:

"'You eternal sheep-stealin', whiskey-drinkin', nigger-lammin', bow-legged, taller-faced rascal, does you want me to tell er lie, by chawin' up my own words? Ef that's what you're arter, jest come on, and I'll larrup you till your mammy won't know you from a pile of sassage-meat.'

"So we kep er ridin' on, and er cussin' one another worse than two Choctaw Injuns, an' torectly we cum to the ferry-boat—whar we had to cross the river. Soon as we got thar, Arch he hopped down off'n his ole hoss, an' commenced shuckin' hisself fur er fight, an' I jumped down too. I see the devil was in him as big as er bull, so I begin gritten my teeth, an' lookin' at him as spunky as er Dominecker rooster; and now, sez I:

"'Mr. Arch Coony,' I sed, 'I'll make you see sites, an' the fust thing you know I'll show them to you.' Then I pulled off my ole Sunday go-to-meetin'-coat, an' slammed it down on er stump, and, sez I: 'Lay thar, ole Methodist, till I learn this 'coon some sense.'

"I soon see thar was gwine to be thar bustinest fight that ever was, so I rolled up my sleeves, an' Arch rolled up hisn, and we was gwine at at it reglar.

"'Now,' sez he, 'ole pra'r-meetin' pitch in.'

"Well, I jist begin sidelin' up, an' he begin sidelin' up. As soon as I got close 'nuff to him, so I could hit him a go-darter, sez he:

"'Hole on er minnit, this ground's too rooty; wait till I clear the sticks away from here, so as I can have a fair chance to give it to you good.'

"'Don't hollar till you're out'n the woods,' sez I; 'p'raps when I'm done you won't say my preachin' ain't nothin' but hollerin, I spec.'

"When he'd done scrapen' off the ground, it looked jist like two bulls had been pawing up the dirt, I give you my word it did.

"Well, as I sed before, he sidled up, an' I sidled up, and now, sez I:

"'Look out for your bread-basket, ole stud, for ef I happen to give you er jolt thar, p'raps it 'ill tarn your stomach.'

"So thar we stood, head an' tail up, jest like two chicken-cocks in layin' time, an' sez I to him:

"'Arch, I'm gwine to maul you till you won't know yourself.'

"Soon as we got close enuff, an' I see he was about to make er lunge at me, sez I:

"'Hole on, dod drot you, wait till I unbutton my gallowses, an' may be so then I'll show you them sites what we was talkin 'bout.'

"Well, all the fellers was stannin' round ready to take sides in the fight, an' toreckly the chap what kep' the ferry begin to get tired of keepin' thar ferry-boat waitin', an', sez he:

"'Cuss your pictures! I'm not gwine to keep this here ferry-boat waitin' no longer, an' people on t'other side waitin' to go over, so if you want to fight, come over on this side an' fight there.'

"'Good as ole wheat,' sez I, anything to keep peace away, 'ef you say so, let's get into the boat, and settle it over thar.'

"Well, they all agreed to that without sayin' a word, an' Arch he got into the ferry-boat. I jumped into the eend of it, and was gwine to lead my hoss on too, but the all-fired critter was skeered to jump on to it, and sez I to the man who kept the ferry, sez I:

"'Why don't you wait till I get's this durned four-legged critter into the boat?'

"He didn't say a word, but kept shovin' the boat out, and toreckly my hoss begin pullin' back with the bridle, an' I er holein' on to it, an' the

furst thing I knowed, I went kerswash into the drink. So you see, in about er minit, thar was I on to this side, and thar was Arch on t'other, and no chance for me to git at him. tell you what, I was hot then—and what was worser, Arch he hollered out and sed he b'leved I skeered the hoss and made him pull back, on purpose to get out'n the scrape. When I hearn him say that, I was so mad I fairly biled. Howsever, I soon see 'twarn't no use raisen er racket 'bout what couldn't be helped, so I 'cluded I'd have my satisfaction out'n him any way. An' I begin shakin' my fist at him, an' er cussin' him. Sez I:

"'You eternal yaller-faced, suck-egg son of er ——, what is it you ain't mean 'nuff for me to call you? I tell you what!' (an' I hope to be forgiven for swearin') I cussed him blue.

"Well, I was so outdone I didn't wait for the boat to come back, for it was gettin' 'most dark and too late for bar-huntin' that day; 'sides, my wife she would be 'spectin' me at the house, and might rais pertickler dust if I didn't get thar in time; so I jumped on my ole hoss, an' put for home. But the way I cussed and 'bused Arch when I got on the hoss, was er sin, an' the further

I got away from him the louder I hollered! I pledge you my word, you might er hearn me er mile.

"To make a long story short, the last word I sed to him, sez I:

"'Arch, you've 'scaped me this time by er axident, but the next time you cross my path, I'll larrup you worse nor the devil beatin' tan-bark! I will, by hokey!'

"Whew!" whistled Mike, drawing a long breath. "I tell you what, I come the nearest wollopin' that feller, not to do it, that ever you saw."

At this moment Mike donned his coon-skin cap, and giving it a terrific *slam*, that brought it over his eyes, vanished.

VI.

AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW.

I HOPE the day is not far distant, when drunkenness will be unknown in our highly-favoured country. The moral world is rising in its strength against the all-destroying vice, and though the monster still struggles, and stings, and poisons, with deadly effect, in many parts of our wide-spread territory, it is perceptibly wounded and weakened; and I flatter myself, if I should live to number ten years more, I shall see it driven entirely from the higher walks of life at least, if not from all grades of society. For the honour of my contemporaries, I would register none of its crimes or its follies;

but, in noticing the peculiarities of the age in which I live, candour constrains me to give this vice a passing notice. The interview which I am about to present to my readers, exhibits it in its mildest and most harmless forms.

In the county of ——, and about five miles apart, lived old Hardy Slow and old Tobias Swift. They were both industrious, honest, sensible farmers, when sober; but they never visited their county-town without getting drunk; and then they were—precisely what the following narrative makes them.

They both happened at the Court House on the same day, when I last saw them together; the former accompanied by his wife, and the latter by his youngest son, a lad about thirteen. Tobias was just clearly on the wrong side of the line, which divides drunk from sober; but Hardy was "*royally corned*" (but not falling) when they met, about an hour by sun in the afternoon, near the rack at which their horses were hitched.

They stopped about four feet apart, and looked each other full in the face for about half a minute, during all which time, Toby sucked his teeth, winked, and made signs with his shoulders and

elbows to the by-standers that he knew Hardy was drunk, and was going to quiz him for their amusement. In the meantime, Hardy looked at Tobias, like a polite man dropping to sleep in spite of himself under a dull long story.

At length Toby broke silence:

"How goes it, Uncle Hardy?" (*winking to the company, and shrugging his shoulders.*)

"Why, Toby!—is that you? Well—upon my—why, Toby!——Lord—help—my—soul and——Why, Toby! what, in, the, worl', set, you, to, gitt'n, drunk—this, time o' day? Swear, poin' blank, you're drunk! Why—you—must be, an old, fool—to, get, drunk, right, before, all these, gentlemen———a'ready, Toby."

"Well, but, now you see (*winking*), Uncle Hardy, a gill-cup an't a quart-pot, nor a quart-pot an't a two-gallon jug; and therefore (*winking and chuckling*), Uncle Hardy, a thing is a thing, turn it which way you will, it just sticks at what it was before you give it first ex—ex—ploit."

"Well, the, Lord, help, my——Why, Toby! what, is the reas'n, you, never, will, answer, me this, one—circumstance———and, that, is——I, always, find, you, drunk, when, I come, here."

"Well, now, but Uncle Hardy, you always know

circumstances alters cases, as the fellow said; and therefore, if one circumstance alters another circumstance——— how's your wife and children?"

"I, swear, poin' blank, I shan't tell you—because, you r'ally, is, too drunk, to know, my wife, when, you, meet, her, in the street, all, day, long, and, she'll, tell, you, the, very, same, thing, as, all, these, gentlemen, can—testimony."

"Well, but now you see, Uncle Hardy, thinking's one thing and knowing's another, as the fellow said; and the proof o' the pudding's chawin' the bag, as the fellow said; and you see—toll-doll-diddle-de-doll-doll-day (*singing and capering*), you think I can't dance? Come, Uncle Hardy, let's dance."

"Why, Toby!—you—come—to this? *I* didn't make, you, drunk, did I? You, an't, took, a drink, with, me, this, live, long, day—is you? I, say, is you, Toby?"

"No, Uncle Har—"

"Well, then, let's go, take a drink."

"Well, but you see, Uncle Hardy, drinkin's drinkin'; but that's neither here nor there, as the fellow said.

"'Come (*singing*) all ye young sparkers, come listen to me,
And I'll sing you a ditti, of a pretti ladee.'"

"Why, Toby! ha—ha—ha—Well, I r'ally, did, think, you, was, drunk, but, now I believe——— blast the flies! I b'lieve, they, jest, as li'f, walk, in my, mouth, as, in, my nose. (*Then looking with eyes half closed at Toby for several minutes.*) Why, Toby, you, spit 'bacoo spit, all over, your jacket—and, that's jist, the very, way, you, got, in your ——fix."

At this moment, Mrs. Slow came up, and immediately after, Swift's son, William.

"Come," said the good lady, "old man, let's go home; it's getting late, and there's a cloud rising; we'll get wet."

"Why, Nancy! what in the worl' has got into you! Is you drunk, too? Well, 'pon, my word, and honor, I, b'lieve, every body, in this town, is, got drunk to-day. Why, Nancy! I never, did, see, you, in, that fix, before, in, all, my, live, long, born, days."

"Well, never mind," said she, "come, let's go home. Don't you see the rain coming up?"

"Well, will, it rain, upon, my, corn-field, or my cotton-patch? Say, Nancy! which one, will it, rain on? But, Lord, help, my, soul, you are, too drunk, to tell me, any, thing, about it. Don'

my corn want rain, Nancy? Now, jist, tell me, that?"

"Yes; but let's go home."

"Then, why, upon, the face, of the earth, won't you, let it, rain, then? I, rather, it, should rain, than not."

"Come, old man," said several by-standers, touched with sympathy for the good lady, "come, get on your horse and go home, and we will help you."

"Oh yes, Uncle Hardy," said Tobias, affecting to throw all humour aside, and to become very sober all at once, "go home with the old woman. Come, gentlemen, let's help 'em on their horses—they're groggy—mighty groggy. Come, old man, I'll help you." (*staggering to Hardy.*)

"Jist look at daddy now!" said Billy; "he's going to help Mr. Swift, and he's drunk as Mr. Swift is. Oh, daddy, come, let's go home, or we'll get mazin' wet."

Toby stooped down to help Hardy on his horse—before the horse was taken from the rack—and throwing his arm round Hardy's legs, he fell backwards, and so did Hardy.

"Why—Lord, bless, my, soul," said Hardy, "I

b'lieve I'm drunk, too! What, upon the, face, of the earth, has got, into, all, of us, this day!"

"Why, Uncle Hardy," said Toby, "you pull us both down together! The old man's mighty groggy," said Toby to me, in a half whisper, and with an arch wink and smile, as he rose up—I happening to be next to him at the moment—"s'pose we help him up, and get him off? The old woman's in for it, too," continued he, winking, nodding, and shrugging up his shoulders very significantly.

"Oh no," said I, "the old woman is perfectly sober, and I never heard of her tasting a drop in all my life."

"Oh," said Toby, assuming the gravity of a parson, "loves it mightily, mightily! Monstrous woman for drinking!—at least that's my opinion. Monstrous fine woman, though! monstrous fine!"

"Oh, daddy, for the Lord's sake let's go home; only see what a rain is coming?" said Billy.

"Daddy 'll go presently, my son."

"Well, here's your horse, git up and let's go. Mammy 'll be sure to be sendin' for us."

"Don't mind him," said Toby, winking to me;

"he's nothing but a boy; I wouldn't take no notice of what he said. He want's me (*winking and smiling*) to go home with him; now you listen."

"Well, come," said I to Uncle Toby, "get on your horse and go home, a very heavy rain is coming up."

"I'll go presently, but you just listen to Bill," said he to me, winking and smiling.

"Oh, daddy, for the Lord's sake let's go home."

Toby smiled archly at me, and winked.

"Daddy, are you going home or not? Jist look at the rain comin'."

Toby smiled and winked.

"Well, I do think a drunken man is the biggest fool in the county," said Bill, "I don't care who he is."

"Bill!" said the old man, very sternly, "'honour thy father and thy mother,' that—that the woman's seed may bruise the serpent's head."

"Well, daddy, tell me if you won't go home! You see it's going to rain powerful. If you won't go, may I go?"

"Bill; 'Leave not thy father who begot *thee;* for thou art my beloved son Esau, in whom I am well pleased.'"

"Why, daddy, it's dropping rain now."

Here Bill was relieved from his anxiety by the appearance of Aaron, a trusty servant, whom Mrs. Slow had despatched for his master, to whose care Bill committed him, and was soon out of sight.

Aaron's custom had long been to pick up his master without ceremony, put him on his horse, and bear him away. So used to this dealing had Toby been, that when he saw Aaron, he surrendered at discretion, and was soon on the road. But as the rain descended in torrents, before even Bill could have proceeded half a mile, the whole of them must have been drenched to the skin.

As to Hardy, whom in the proper order we ought to have disposed of first, he was put on his horse by main force, and was led off by his wife, to whom he was muttering as far as I could hear him:

"Why, Nancy! How, did, you, get, in, such a fix? You'll, fall, off, your, horse, sure, as you're born, and I'll have to put you up again."

As they were constrained to go in a walk, they too must have got wringing wet, though they had a quarter of an hour the start of Toby.

VII.

BEN WILSON'S LAST JUG-RACE.

COMING up from Newport, on the pretty little steamer 'Perry,' a few days ago, I fell in with, or chanced to lay across the track of, a Mississippi flat-boatman whom I had not seen for three years, and from having had, once upon a time, a rather personal adventure with him, you may guess that the meeting was one of curious congratulation.

Ben and I had both travelled "some" since we had parted, and he had, as well as myself, many things to tell.

I was sitting on the upper deck, consulting the opinions of one of Job Patterson's A No. 1 Havanas,

when a pretty muscular and sun-burnt specimen of humanity hove alongside, and brought a rather big paw down upon my right shoulder with a bim that made me start *a little*.

"How are you old J comp'ny?" was the first broadside. "I ha'nt set eyes on you sence we had the scrimmidge down to the Washington ball-room, Orleans. Raythera time that ar?" and he winked his little black eyes until I fancied I heard the lids snap.

"Ben Wilson?" I inquired.

"'Zactly; you've hit it on the head this time. How've you ben, and whar?"

"Travelling generally," I responded; "been looking at the Rhode Island Legislature of late. About health I'm as snug as a kitten, and as hearty as you seem to be."

"I? Yes; ef I'd a had them sinners" (showing a lump of bones and muscles *something* larger than mine, I think), "when that ar scrimmidge took place, there'd a been a different report of killed and wounded at the perlice shop. But that ain't no consekense now, tho' thar is a ugly sort of a seam on the larboard side of my phizognomy. What'll you sample?"

Such a polite invitation was not under the circumstances to be refused, and a liquid strengthener was presently applied to the in'nards of both. A couple more of Job's regalias were lighted, and we walked forward to look at the sights and enjoy a little quiet conversation.

"You hev'nt got that thar took-pick about you, hev you?" asked Ben, as we got afront of the wheel-house.

"No."

"I'm sorry for that, for I'd a like to had it for a keepsake, *that* knife. You punched it into my jowl rather vigorously that night."

"And this," said I, rolling up my right sleeve, and pointing to a very pretty stiletto scar.

"'Twarn't mine, by all the broad horns that ever run in Mississip'!" roared Ben. "'Twas the French bar-keeper did that."

"Never mind, Ben," said I, "I thought 'twas you at the time; but anyhow, a man hasn't much time to debate nice questions when that pile of ivory" (pointing to his big fist) "is making love to his windpipe."

"No more he han't, and no more you hadn't," said Ben, "en it's all forgiv'. Less change the topick."

"Been boating since I met you?" I inquired, after a short pause.

"Well, yes, mostly," answered Ben, deliberately. "Druv a pretty fair business last year; only sunk one broad-horn, en that war snagged. Saved part of the load, en lost it agin at a *cre*-vasse. I had a fust-rate openin' this spring, but a awkward accident kicked all the fat into the fire."

"Bad luck, eh? how was it?"

"Did you ever jug for buffalo fish?"

"Never."

"Han't no idee on the *pre*-cise way it is done?"

"Not the least. Yes, I did see something about it in the 'Spirit,' but I've forgotten all about it."

"'Sperit?' Oh, that's the sportin' paper down to York. Nolan, and Hooper, and Steve Tucker writes to it. Some jokes in that ar sheet, onst in a while."

"Occasionally, I calculate; but this jugging for buffaloes."

"Sartin. You see it's as easy as fallin' off a log. Git a dozen jugs en two canoes; hitch your lines to the handles of the jugs, put on your bait, and then toss them overboard. When you sees a jug begin to bob, there's a buffalo thar: en when it begins to dive and run, you may calk'late there's one varmint

hooked. Strike out like a pointer, pull up the line, and the fish is *thar;* but you've got to keep your weather eye open, or you lose him."

"I understand; but the awkward accident you spoke of?"

"Yes, of course; that'll come in good time. D'you recollect that feller with the one eye that stuck by me in that scrimmidg at Orleans?"

"Perfectly; I *felt* him audibly that night."

"Joe Stilwell. Wal, Joe and I run together, en we run sens, tel we fell out on one of these jug affairs; en then he sot up for hisself — oppersition. 'Bout the last of A-*prile* we hap'nd to come together to Saint Lewis, en started down the river the same day. Joe had the start five hours, an' I were glad of it; for he hadn't no good feelin' towards me, en' I hadn't none for him, I swar. It war two days 'fore I see anythink of him, but a man who got on at Milses wood-yard said Joe wanted to tackle me; en sez he, 'Z'likes not he'll stop to Ransom's for freight, for he han't got more'n two-thirds his complement,' Sez I: 'Ef Joe runs across my bows, he knows what'll be the konsekens;' an' we didn't say no more about the matter.

"It was midnight when we got to Ransom's, an'

I was debatin' whether it warn't better to shove along then to stop, when I here's Joe's voice a usin' of my name. That was all war wanted to settle the matter. I tied up, and asked all hands to licker. Joe he was the fust one to come up, sez he:

"'Ben, we've had some rily feelins, en let's settle them rash'nally.'

"'How?' sez I, not 'zactly understandin' him.

"'Rash'nally,' sez he. 'I'll drink with you, and you drink with me, en then we'll call it squar.'

"''Greed!' sez I, en we lickered round twiste, en Joe and I shook hands, en squar'd off all old 'counts *pertensively*.

"Thar was suthin' in his looks I didn't like when we shuck hands; but sez I to myself, 'this coon sleeps in the day-time maybe, but he's wide awake on this yer night.' Ransom, he seemed glad we'd made up again 'fer all time,' es he said, and we lickered 'long a him.

"While we was drinkin' 'long a Ransom, one of my hands come in en whispered softly in my ear, all unbeknown to the rest, that somebody hed ben

tryin' to cut my starn-cable, and then he sneaked back to watch for the marorder.

"I got off pretty soon after, en went aboard a *leetle* riled. But I didn't tell the boys who I thought was the rascal, thoar I told em to keep a sharp watch, en fire to kill, when they did shoot. But tha' warn't nobody come, Joe knew better than to play with the old fox in his den—Joe did.

"Nex' mornin' we were just castin' off, when Joe come down to the wharf-boat, en sez he:

"'You ain't goin' off mad, ar you?'

"'No,' sez I.

"'Wal,' sez he, 'less take a partin' smile.'

"I didn't like the idea, but Ransom he said:

"'Come in, Ben!' en in I went and drinkt.

"'What d'you say to a buffalo-juggin?' said Joe, arter we'd lickered.

"'It's too airly in the season,' sez I; 'b'sides I'm off for Orleans.'

"'So'm I,' said Joe, 'at eleven; en we'll go company.'

"'What's the blaze?' said Ransom.

"'Two canoes, and one jug,' said Joe.

"I knowed what he was after then, for it showed

clean out'n his eyes. Joe war the best swimmer, en he thort ef we cum together an' upset the canoes, he'd have the advantage. He knowed he'd git catawompously chored up ashore, en *he wanted to drown me.*"

"What a devil incarnate! I exclaimed."

"That's just him 'zactly. I thort a minnit, and then sez I:

"'I'm your man.'

"Wal, a skiff tuck out the only jug, en Joe en I paddled from shore leisurely.

"'A bob!' yelled out Ransom, en we started.

"We was about ten rods apart, en neck-en-neck. On we swept like greased lightnin', Joe leadin' by 'bout *two inches,* I should guess. I had not look't at Joe sens we left shore, but as we draw'd nigh the jug I seed he had his coat and jacket off. We was within ten foot of the jug, en both dropped paddles, en I shed my coat en jacket a *leetle* quicker'n common. Tha' warn't no misunderstandin' between us then; en as the canoes come together, both grappled and went overboard, and underneath the water."

Ben here paused, took out his bandanna, and wiped the big drops off of his forehead, as coolly

as if he was recounting the events of a dinner-party.

"Well," I urged impatiently, "you both went under the water?"

"Yes, that was the *accident* happened!"

"Accident? explain."

"Why, I've no more to say'n this. I riz, en got aboard my broad-horn, en come away."

"But Joe—what became of him?"

"*Joe? he was a missin' 'long with my bowie-knife!*"

I parted with Ben, when the 'Perry' touched the wharf at Providence, not caring, *under the circumstances*, to inquire which way he was travelling.

VIII.

MIKE FINK IN A TIGHT PLACE.

MIKE FINK, a notorious Buckeye-hunter, was contemporary with the celebrated Davy Crockett, and his equal in all things relating to human prowess. It was even said that the animals knew the crack of his rifle, and would take to their secret hiding-places, on the first intimation that Mike was about. Yet strange, though true, he was but little known beyond his immediate "settlement."

When *we* knew him he was an old man—the blasts of seventy winters had silvered o'er his head, and taken the elasticity from his limbs; yet in the

whole of his life was Mike never worsted, except upon one occasion. To use his own language, he never "gin in," used up, to anything that travelled on two legs or four, but once.

"That *once* we want," said Bill Slasher, as some dozen of us sat in the bar-room of the only tavern in the "settlement."

"Gin it to us now, Mike; you've promised long enough, and you're old now, and needn't care," continued Bill.

"Right, right, Bill," said Mike; "but we'll open with a *licker* all around fust, it'll kind o'save my feelin's I reckon."

"Thar, that's good. Better than t'other barrel, if anything."

"Well, boys," commenced Mike, "you may talk o' your scrimmages, tight places and sich like, and subtract 'em altogether in one all-mighty big 'un, and they hain't no more to be compared to the one I war in, than a dead kitten to an old she-bar, I've fout all kinds of varmints, from a Ingun down to a rattlesnake, and never was willin' to quit fust, but this once, and t'was with a bull!

"You see, boys, it was an awful hot day in August, and I war near runnin' off into pure *ile*,

when I war thinkin' that a *dip* in the creek mout save me. Well, thar was a mighty nice place in old Deacon Smith's medder for that partic'lar bizziness. So I went down among the bushes to unharness. I jest hauled the old red shirt over my head, and war thinkin' how scrumptious a feller of my size would feel a wallerin' round in that ar water, and was jest 'bout goin' in, when I seed the old Deacon's bull a makin a b-line to whar I stood.

"I know'd the old cuss, for he'd skar'd more people than all the parsons in the 'settlement,' and cum mighty near killin' a few. Think's I, Mike, you're in rather a tight place. Get your fixin's on, for he'll be drivin' them big horns o' his in yer bowels afore that time. Well, you'll hev to try the old varmint naked, I reck'n.

"The bull war on one side o' the creek, and I on t'other, and the way he made the 'sile' fly for a while, as if he war diggin' my grave, war distressin'!

"'Come on, ye bellerin' old heathen,' said I, 'and don't be a standin' there; for, as the old Deacon says o' the devil, yer not comely to look on.'

"This kind o' reached his understandin', and

made him more wishious ; for he hoofed a little like, and made a drive. And as I don't like to stand in anybody's way, I gin him plenty sea-room. So he kind o' passed by me, and cum out on t'other side; and as the captain o' the mud-swamp ranger's would say: 'bout face for another charger.'

"Though I war ready for him this time, he come mighty nigh runnin' foul o' me. So I made up my minde the next time he went out he wouldn't be alone. So when he passed, I grappled his tail, and he pulled me out on the 'sile,' and as soon as we were both a'top o' the bank, old Brindle stopped, and was about comin' round agin, when I begin pull'n t'other way.

"Well, I reckon this kind o' *riled* him, for he fust stood stock still, and look'd at me for a spell, and then commenced pawin' and bellerin', and the way he made his hind gearing play in the air, war beautiful!

"But it warn't no use, he couldn't *tech* me, so he kind o' stopped to get wind for suthin' devilish, as I *judged* by the way he stared. By this time I had made up my mind to stick to his tail as long as it stuck to his back-bone! I didn't like to

holler fur help, nuther, kase it war agin my principles; and then the Deacon had preached at his house, and it warn't far off nuther.

"I know'd if he *hern* the noise, the hull congregation would come down; and as I warn't a married man, and had a kind o' hankerin' arter a gal that war thar, I didn't feel as if I would like to be seed in that ar predicament.

"'So,' ses I, 'you old sarpent, do yer cussedst!'

"And so he did; for he drug me over every briar and stump in the field, until I was sweatin' and bleedin' like a fat *bar* with a pack o' hounds at his heels. And my name ain't Mike Fink, if the old critter's tail and I didn't blow out sometimes at a dead level with the varmint's back!

"So you may kalkilate we made good time. Bimeby he slackened a little, and then I had him for a spell, for I jest dropped behind a stump, and that snubbed the critter.

"'Now,' ses I, 'you'll pull up this 'ere white oak, break you're *tail,* or jist hold on a bit till I blow.'

"Well, while I war settin' thar, an idea struck

me that I had better be a gettin' out o' this in some way. But *how*, adzackly was the *pint!* If I let go and run, he'd be a foul o' me sure.

"So lookin' at the matter in all its bearins, I cum to the conclusion that I'd better let somebody *know* whar I was. So I gin a *yell* louder than a locomotive whistle, and it warn't long before I seed the Deacon's two dogs a comin' down like as if they war seein' which could get thar fust.

"I know'd who they war arter—they'd jine the bull agin me, I war sartin, for they war awful wenimous, and had a spite agin me.

"'So,' ses I, 'old Brindle, as ridin' is as cheap as walkin' on this rout, if you've no objections, I'll jest take a deck passage on that ar back o' your'n.'

"So I wasn't long gettin' astride of him, and then if you'd been thar, you'd 'ave sworn thar warn't nothin' human in that ar *mix;* the sile flew so orrfully as the critter and I rolled round the field—one dog on one side and one on t'other, tryin' to clinch my feet!

"I pray'd and cuss'd, and cuss'd and pray'd, until I couldn't tell which I did last—and neither warn't of any use, they war so orrfully mix'd up.

"Well, I reckon I rid about an hour this way, when old Brindle thought it war time to stop and take in a supply of wind and cool off a little! So when we got round to a tree that stood thar, he nat'rally halted!

"'Now,' ses I, 'old boy, you'll lose *one* passenger sartin!'

"So I just clum upon a branch, kalkelating to roost thar till I starved, afore I'd be rid round that ar way any more.

"I war makin' tracks for the top of the tree, when I heard suthin' a makin' an orful buzzin' over head, I kinder looked up, and if thar warn't—well thar's no use swearin' now, but it war the biggest *hornet's nest* ever built!

"You'll gin in now, I reckon, Mike, case thar's no help for you! But an idea struck me, then, that I'd stand a heap better chance a ridin' the old bull than where I war. Ses I, 'Old feller, if you'll hold on, I'll ride to the next *station* any how, let that be whar it will!'

"So I jest drapped aboard him agin, and looked aloft to see what I'd gained in changing quarters; and, gentlemen, I'm a liar if thar warn't nigh half

a bushel of the stingen' varmints ready to pitch into me when the word 'go' was gin!

"Well, I reckon they got it, for 'all hands' started for our *company!* Some on 'em hit the dogs—about a *quart* struck me, and the rest charged old Brindle.

"This time, the dogs led off fust, 'dead' beat, for the old Deacon's, and as soon as old Brindle and I could get under way, we *followed.* And as I war only a deck passenger, and had nothin' to do with stearin' the craft, I swore if I had we shouldn't have run that channel, any how!

"But, as I said before, the dogs took the lead—Brindle and I next, and the hornets dre'kly arter. The dogs yellin', Brindle bellerin', and the hornets buzzin' and stingin'! I didn't say nothin' for it warn't no use.

"Well, we'd got bout two hundred yards from the house, and the Deacon hearn us and cum out. I seed him hold up his hands and turn *white!* I reckon he war prayin' then, for he didn't expect to be called for so soon, and it warn't long, neither, afore the hull congregation, men, women, and children, cum out, and then all hands went to yellin'!

"None of 'em had the fust notion that Brindle and I belonged to this world. I jest turned my head, and passed the *hull* congregation! I seed the run would be up soon, for Brindle couldn't turn an inch from a fence that stood dead a-head.

"Well, we reached that fence, and I went *ashore*, over the old critter's head, landin' on t'other side, and lay thar stunned. It warn't long afore some of 'em as war not so scared, come round to see what I war, for all hands kalkelated that the bull and I belonged *together!* But when Brindle walked off by himself, they seed how it war, and one of 'em said:

"'Mike Fink has got the *worst of the scrimmage once in his life!*'

"Gentlemen, from that day I drapped the *courtin'* bizziness, and never spoke to a gal since! And when my hunt is up on this yearth, thar won't be any more F I N K S and it's all owin' to Deacon Smith's Brindle Bull."

IX.

OUR SINGING-SCHOOL.

A CHAPTER FROM THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF PIGWACKET.

My second cousin by the mother's side, Benjamin Blackletter, A.M., who was born and lived all his lifetime in the ancient town of Pigwacket, has compiled, with scrupulous accuracy, the annals of that venerable town, in three volumes folio, which he proposes to publish as soon as he can find a Boston bookseller who will undertake the job. I hope this will be accomplished before long, for Pigwacket is a very interesting spot, though not very widely known. It is astonishing what important events are going

on every day, in odd corners of this country, which the world knows nothing about. When I read over these trusty folios, which bear the title, "THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF PIGWACKET, *from its first settlement until the present day, comprising an authentic relation of all its civil, military, ecclesiastical, financial and statistical concerns, compiled from original records, &c.*" and see the great deeds that have been done in that respectable town, and the great men that have figured therein, and reflect that the fame thereof, so far from extending to the four corners of the earth, has hardly penetrated as far as Boston, I heave a sigh for mortal glory.

Knowing that my readers must be impatient for the appearance of the three folios of the History of Pigwacket, and as they cannot be put to press for some months, I avail myself of this chance to feed their curiosity by an extract, as the cook at Camancho's wedding gave Sancho a couple of pullets to stay his stomach till dinner-time. Take then the portion contained in Chapter CLXXXVIII., which begins as follows:

It becomes my lot at this period of the narrative, to chronicle an event that formed quite an epoch in

the history of the town, or rather of that part which constituted our parish. This occurrence may not be deemed by the world quite so momentous as the Declaration of Independence, or the French Revolution, but the reader may believe me, it was a great affair in our community. This was no less than a mighty feud in church matters about psalm-singing. The whole parish went by the ears about it, and the affair gave the community such a rouse, that many people feared we should never fairly recover the shock. The particulars were these:

From time immemorial we had continued to sing psalms at meeting, as became good Christians and lovers of harmony. But my readers, accustomed to the improvements of modern days, have need to be informed that up to this period, our congregation had practised this accomplishment according to that old method of psalmody, known by the designation of "read-a-line-and-sing-a-line." This primitive practice, which had first come into use when hymn-books were scarce, was still persisted in, though the necessity for its continuance no longer existed. Our church music, therefore, exhibited the quaint and patriarchal alternation of recitation and melody, if melody it might be called, while some towns in the neighbourhood had adopted the new fashion, and

surprised us by the superiority of their performances over the rude and homely chants of old.

But it was not long ere the wish to improve our style of singing began to show itself among us. At the first announcement of such a design, the piety of many of the old members took the alarm, and the new method was denounced as heathenish and profane.

The chief personage who figured in the troubles which arose upon this matter was Deacon Dogskin, a man of scrupulous orthodoxy, highly dogmatical on theological points, and a leader of powerful influence in the church. This dignitary, whose office it had been to give out the several lines of the psalm as they were sung, was one of the sturdiest opponents of the new-fangled psalmody, and set his face against the innovation with all the zeal and devotion of a primitive Christian. Unfortunately for him, Deacon Grizzle, his colleague, took the opposite side of the question, exemplifying the vulgar saying, "Two of a trade can never agree."

The discordancy, to tell the whole truth, between these two worthies lay in more interests than one, and it is to be doubted whether they would have come to a rupture in church affairs, had not their

mutual animosities been quickened by certain temporal janglings; for so it happened that the two deacons kept each a grocery store, and neither of them ever let a chance slip of getting away the other's custom. Sorry I am to record the frailties of two such reputable personages, who looked upon themselves as burning and shining lights in our community; but I am afraid that the fact cannot be concealed, that the petty bickerings which arose between them on these little matters of filthy lucre were suffered to intrude within the walls of the sanctuary, and stir up the flame of discord in the great psalm-singing feud; whereby, as our neighbour Hopper Paul sagely remarked, the world may learn wisdom, and lay it down as a maxim, that church affairs can never thrive when the deacons are grocers.

Deacon Grizzle, therefore, partly from conscience and partly from spite, placed himself at the head of the innovators, and took every occasion to annoy his associate with all sorts of ingenious reasons why the singing should be performed without any intermixture of recitation. The younger part of the congregation were chiefly ranged under his banner, but the older people mustered strong on

the opposite side. To hear the disputes that were carried on upon this point, and the pertinacity with which each one maintained his opinion, an uninformed spectator would have imagined the interests of the whole Christian world were at stake. In truth, a great many of the good old souls really looked upon the act of altering the mode of singing as a departure from the faith given unto the saints. It was a very nice and difficult thing to come to a conclusion where all parties were so hotly interested, but an incident which fell out not long afterward, contributed to hasten the revolution.

Deacon Dogskin, as I have already remarked, was the individual on whom devolved, by prescriptive right, the duty of giving out the psalm. The Deacon was in all things a stickler for ancient usages; not only was he against giving up a hair's breadth of the old custom, but his attachment to the antique forms went so far as to embrace all the circumstances of immaterial moment connected with them. His predilection for the old tone of voice was not to be overcome by any entreaty, and we continued to hear the same nasal, snuffling drawl, which, nobody knows how, he had contracted in the early part of his deaconship, although on

common occasions he could speak well enough. But the tone was a part of his vocation; long use had consecrated it, and the Deacon would have his way. His psalm-book, too, by constant use had become to such a degree thumbed and blurred and torn and worn, that it was a puzzle how, with his old eyes, he could make anything of one half the pages. However, a new psalm-book was a thing he would never hear spoken of, for, although the thing could not be styled an innovation, inasmuch as it contained precisely the same collocation of words and syllables, yet it was the removal of an old familiar object from his sight, and his faith seemed to be bound up in the greasy covers and dingy leaves of the volume. So the Deacon stuck to his old psalm-book, and, by the help of his memory where the letter-press failed him, he made a shift to keep up with the singers, who, to tell the truth, were not remarkable for the briskness of their notes, and dealt more in semibreves than in demi-semi-quavers.

But, on a certain day, it happened that the Deacon, in the performance of his office, stumbled on a line which happened to be more than usually thumbed, and defied all his attempts to puzzle it

out. In vain he wiped his spectacles, brought the book close to his nose, then held it as far off as possible, then brought his nose to the book, then took it away again, then held it up to the light, then turned it this way and that, winked and snuffled and hemmed and coughed—the page was too deeply grimed by the application of his own thumb, to be deciphered by any ocular power. The congregation were at a dead stand. They waited and waited, but the Deacon could not give out the line; every one stared, and the greatest impatience began to be manifested. At last Elder Darby, who commonly took the lead in singing, called out:

"What's the matter, Deacon?"

"I can't read it," replied the Deacon in a dolorous and despairing tone.

"Then spell it," exclaimed a voice from the gallery.

All eyes were turned that way, and it was found to proceed from Tim Crackbrain, a fellow known for his odd and whimsical habits, and respecting whom nobody could ever satisfy himself whether he was knave, fool, or madman. The Deacon was astounded, the congregation gaped and stared, but there was no more singing that day. The profane be-

haviour of Tim caused great scandal, and he was severely taken in hand by a regular kirk session.

This, however, was not the whole, for it was plainly to be perceived that the old system had received a severe blow in this occurrence, as no one could deny that such an awkward affair could never have happened in the improved method of psalmody. The affair was seized by the advocates of improvement, and turned against their opponents. Deacon Dogskin and his old psalm-book got into decidedly bad odour; the result could no longer be doubtful; a parish meeting was held, and a resolution passed to abolish the old system, and establish a singing school. In such a manner departed this life, that venerable relic of ecclesiastical antiquity, read-a-line-and-sing-a-line, and we despatched our old acquaintance to the tomb of oblivion, unwept, unhonoured, but not unsung.

This event, like all great revolutions, did not fail to give sad umbrage to many in the church; and as to Deacon Dogskin, who had fought as the great champion of the primitive system, he took it in such dudgeon that he fell into a fit of the sullens, which resulted in a determination to leave a com-

munity where his opinion and authority had been so flagrantly set at nought. Within two years, therefore, he sold off his farm, settled all his concerns both temporal and spiritual in the town, and removed to a village about fifteen miles distant. His ostensible motive for the removal was his declining age, which he declared to be unequal to the cultivation of so large a farm as he possessed in our neighbourhood; but the true reason was guessed at by every one, as the Deacon could never speak of the singing-school without evident marks of chagrin.

Be this as it may, we proceeded to organise the singing-school forthwith, for it was determined to do things in style. First of all, it was necessary to find a singing-master who was competent to instruct us theoretically in the principles of the art, and put us to the full discipline of our powers. No one, of course, thought of going out of the town for this, and our directors shortly pitched upon a personage known to every body by the name of Hopper Paul. This man knew more tunes than any person within twenty miles, and, for aught we knew, more than any other man in the world. He could sing Old Hundred, and Little Marlborough,

and Saint Andrews, and Bray, and Mear, and Tanzar, and Quercy, and at least half a dozen others whose names I have forgotten, so that he was looked upon as a musical prodigy.

I shall never forget Hopper Paul, for both the sounds and sights he exhibited were such as could hardly be called earthly. He was about six feet and a half high, exceedingly lank and long, with a countenance which at the first sight would suggest to you the idea that he had suffered a *face-quake*, for the different parts of his visage appeared to have been shaken out of their places and never to have settled properly together. His mouth was capable of such a degree of dilation and collapse and twisting, that it looked like a half a dozen pair of lips sewed into one. The voice to which this comely pair of jaws gave utterance might have been compared to the lowing of a cow, or the deepest bass of an overgrown bull-frog, but hardly to any sound made by human organs.

Hopper Paul, possessing all these accomplishments, was therefore chosen head singer, and teacher of the school, which was immediately set on foot. This was a great affair in the eyes of all the young persons of both sexes, the thing being

the first of that sort which had ever been heard of in our parts; for though the natives of the town were a psalm-singing race, like all genuine New Englanders, yet they had hitherto learned to sing much in the same way as they learned to talk, not by theory, but in the plainest way of practice, each individual joining in with the strains that were chanted at meeting according to the best of his judgment. In this method, as the reader may suppose, they made but a blundering sort of melody, yet as the tunes were few, and each note drawled out to an unconscionable length, all were more or less familiar with their parts, or if they got into the wrong key, had time to change it ere the line was ended. But things were now to be set on a different footing; great deeds were to be done, and each one was anxious to make a figure in the grand choir. All the young people of the parish were assembled, and we began operations.

How we got through our first essays, I need not say, except that we made awkward work enough of it. There were a great many voices that seemed made for nothing but to spoil all our melody: but what could we do? All were determined to learn to sing, and Hopper Paul was of opinion that the

bad voices would grow mellow by practice, though how he could think so whenever he heard his own, passes my comprehension. However, we could all raise and fall the notes, and that was something. We met two evenings in each week during the winter, and by the beginning of spring we had got so well drilled in the gamut that we began to practise regular tunes. Now we breathed forth such melodies as I think have seldom been heard elsewhere; but as we had no standard of excellence to show us the true character of our performances, we could never be aware that our music was not equal to the harmony of the spheres.

It was thought a peculiar excellence to sing through the nose, and take a good reasonable time to swell out every note. Many of us were apt to get into too high a key, but that was never regarded, provided we made noise enough. In short, after a great deal more practice we were pronounced to be thoroughly skilled in the science, for our lungs had been put to such a course of discipline that every one of us could roar with a most stentorian grace; and as to our commander-in-chief, no man on earth ever deserved better than he, the name of Boanerges, or Son of Thunder.

It was decided, therefore, that on Fast day next we should take the field; so we were all warned to prepare ourselves to enter the singing seats at the meeting on that eventful day. Should I live a thousand years, I shall never forget it; this was to be the first public exhibition of our prowess, and we were exhorted to do our best. The exhortation was unnecessary, for we were as ambitious as the most zealous of our friends could desire, and we were especially careful in rehearsing the tunes before hand.

The day arrived, and we marched in a body to take possession. No stalwart knights, at a tournament, ever spurred their chargers into the lists with more pompous and important feelings than we entered the singing seats. The audience, of course, were all expectation, and when the hymn was given out, we heard it with beating hearts.

It was amusing, however, in the midst of our trepidation, to witness the countenance of Deacon Dogskin, who was obliged to sit facing us during the whole service. His looks were as sour and cynical as if he could have driven us out of the house, and he never vouchsafed to cast a glance at

us from beginning to end of the performance. There was another person who had been a great stickler for the ancient usage. This was Elder Darby, who had been head singer under the Deacon's administration, and looked upon himself as dividing the honours of that system with the Deacon himself. He accordingly fought hard against the innovation, and was frequently heard to declare that the whole platform of christian doctrine would be undermined, if more than one line was suffered to be sung at a time. In fact, this personage, being what is emphatically called a "weak brother," but full of zeal and obstinacy, gave us a great deal more trouble than the Deacon, who was not deficient in common shrewdness, notwithstanding his oddities. This was a bitter day, therefore, to Elder Darby, who felt very awkward at finding his occupation gone, and his enemies triumphant all in the same moment.

But we were now called upon to sing, and every eye, except those of the Deacon and a few others, was turned upward: the hymn was given out, Hopper Paul brandished his pitch-pipe and set the tune, and we began with stout hearts and strong lungs. Such sounds had never been heard within

those walls before. The windows rattled, and the ceiling shook with the echo, in such a manner that some people thought the great chandelier would have a down-come. Think of the united voices of all the sturdy, able-bodied lads and lassies of the parish pouring forth the most uproarious symphony of linked sweetness long drawn out, that their lungs could furnish, and you will have some faint idea of our melodious intonations. At length we came to a verse in the hymn where the words chimed in with the melody in such a striking and effective manner that the result was overpowering. The verse ran thus:

"So pilgrims on the scorching sand,
Beneath a burning sky,
Long for a cooling stream at hand,
And they must drink, or die."

When we struck one after another into the third line, and trolled forth the reiterations,

"Long for a cooling—
Long for a cooling—
Long for a cooling—coo—oo—ooling,"

we verily thought, one and all, that we were soaring up—up—upwards on the combined euphony of the

tune and syllables, into the seventh heaven of harmony. The congregation were rapt into ecstasies, and thought they had never heard music till then. It was a most brilliant triumph for us; every voice, as we thought, though of course the malcontents must be excepted, struck in with us, and swelled the loud peal till the walls rung again. But I must not omit to mention the strange conduct of Elder Darby, who, in the midst of this burst of enthusiastic approbation, never relaxed the stern and sour severity of his looks, but took occasion of the first momentary pause in the melody, to utter a very audible and disdainful expression of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!"

Deacon Grizzle was by no means slow in perceiving these manifestations of the Elder's mortified feelings, and did not fail to join him on his way home from meeting, for the express purpose of annoying him further by commendations of the performances. All he could get in reply was a further exclamation of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!" In fact, the Elder's obstinacy was incurable; he was seized during the following week with a strange deafness in one of his ears, and as it happened very strangely too, to be that ear which

was turned towards the singing seats when he sat in his pew, he declared it would be impossible to hear sufficiently well on that side of his head, to accompany the singers: as to altering his position, it was not to be thought of: he had occupied the same spot for forty years, and could no more be expected to change his seat than to change his creed. The consequence was, that on the day we began singing, the Elder left off. From that time forth, he never heard the subject of church psalmody alluded to, without a chop-fallen look, a rueful shake of the head, a sad lamentation over the decline of sound christian doctrine, and a peevish and indignant exclamation of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!"

X.

WHERE JOE MERIWEATHER WENT TO.

"I DO believe that's Bill Meriweather," said the old lady hostess of the sign of "The Buck" tavern, as attracted by the noise of a horse's hoofs, she raised her eyes from her occupation of stringing dried slips of pumpkin, and descried, this side of the first bend in the road, a traveller riding a jaded horse towards the mansion.

"I do believe that's Bill Meriweather. It's about time for him to be round agin a buyin' shoats. But whar's Joe? Phillisy Ann," continued Mrs. Harris, raising her voice, "catch a couple of young chickens, and get supper ready soon as ye can, you dratted lazy

wench you, for here comes Bill Meriweather. But whar's Joe? How do you do, Mr. Meriweather," concluded the old lady, as the stranger arrived in front of the porch.

"Lively," replied that individual as he proceeded to dismount and tie his horse. "How do you come on yourself, old 'omen."

"Pretty well, Bill; how's craps down in your parts?"

"Bad, uncommon bad," replied Bill, "there's a new varmint come around in our country, that's got a mortal likin' fur the tobacker crap. They looks a good deal like a fox, but are as big as a three year old nigger, and kin climb a tree like a squearl, and they steals a dozen or so 'hands' every night, and next mornin' if you notice, you'll see all the tops of the pine-oaks around the plantation kivered with them a dryin', and the infernal chawtobacks—that's what we call 'em—a settin' up in a crotch, a chawin' what is *cured*, and squirtin' ambeer all over the country. Got any on 'em up here yet?"

"The goodness, Lord ha' mercy, no, Bill! But whar's Joe?" Up to this time Mr. Meriweather had been as pleasant and jovial a looking Green

River man, as you might find in a week's ride along the southern border of Kentucky, and had finished his lecture on the natural history of the chawto-back, and the unsaddling his horse at the same time; but no sooner had the old lady asked the question, "Whar's Joe?" than he instantaneously dropped on the bench alongside the questioner, gave her an imploring look of pity and despair, let his head fall into his open palms, and bending down both until they nearly touched his knees, he uttered such a sigh as might a Louisville and New Orleans eight boiler steam-packet in the last stage of collapsed flues.

"Goodness, gracious, Bill! what's the matter?" cried the old lady, letting her stringing apparatus fall. "Hev you got the cramps? Phillisy Ann, bring that bottle here outen the cupboard, quick, and some pepper pods!"

"Ah—h! no!" sighed the sufferer, not changing his position, but mournfully shaking his head, "I ain't got no cramps." However, Phillisy Ann arriving in "no time" with the article of household furniture called for, that gentleman, utterly disregarding the pepper pods, proceeded to pour out into a tumbler, preparatory to drinking, a sufficient

quantity of amber coloured fluid to utterly exterminate any cramps that might, by any possibility, be secretly lingering in his system, or fortify himself against any known number that might attack him in the distant future; and having finished, immediately assumed his former position, and went into most surprisingly exact imitations of a wheezy locomotive on a foggy morning.

"Merciful powers! what can the matter be?" exclaimed the widow, now thoroughly excited, as Mr. Meriweather appeared to be getting no better, but was rocking himself up and down, "like a man who is sawing marble," groaning and muttering inarticulate sounds, as if in the last extremity of bodily anguish. But Mr. Meriweather was for some time unable to make any reply that could be understood, until at length, at the conclusion of a very fierce paroxysm, the widow thought she could catch the two words, "Poor Joe!"

"Is there anything the matter with Joe?" asked the old lady. If it were possible for any *one* man to feel and suffer, as far as appearances went, all the agony and misery that a half dozen of the most miserable and unfortunate of the human family ever have felt and suffered, and yet live, Mr. Meri-

weather certainly was that individual, for he immediately went off into such a state of sighs, groans, and lamentations, mingled with exclamations of "Poor Joe!" "Poor Brother Joe!" that the widow, aroused to the highest state of sympathy and pity, could do nothing but wipe her eyes with her apron, and repeat the question.

"Whar is Joe, Mr. Meriweather, is he sick?"

"Oh—h—no!" groaned his mourning brother.

"Is he dead then? poor Joe!" faintly inquired the old lady.

"I don't know that," was the broken reply.

"The Lord ha' mercy on our sinful sowls! then *whar* is he?" cried the widow, breaking out afresh. "Is he run away to Orleans—or gone to Californey? Yes, that's it! and the poor boy'll be eaten' up by them 'diggers' that they say goes rootin' round that outlandish country, like a set of mean stinkin' ground-hogs. Poor Joe! he was a fine little fellow, an' it was only the other day last year, when you was on your rounds, that he eat all my little bo——."

"No, he ain't gone to Californey as I know," interrupted his brother.

"Then, for mercy's sake! do tell a body what's become on him!" rather tartly inquired the old lady.

"Why, you see, Mrs. Harris," replied Mr. Meriweather, still keeping the same position, and interrupting the narrative with several bursts of grief, (which we'll leave out). "You see, Mrs. Harris, Joe and I went up airly in the spring to get a boat load of rock from Boone county, to put up the foundation of the new houses we're buildin', fur there ain't no rock down in them rich sily bottoms in our parts. Well, we got along pretty considerable, fur we had five kegs of blast along, and what with the hire of some niggers, we managed to get our boat loaded, an' started fur home in about three weeks. You never did see anythin' rain like it did the fust day we was floatin' down, but we worked like a cornfilled nigger ov a Crismus week and pretty near sundown we'd made a matter ov nigh twenty mile afore we were ashore and tied up. Well, as we didn't have any shelter on the flat, we raised a rousin' big fire on the bank, close to whar she was tied up, and cooked some grub; and I'd eaten a matter of two pounds of side, and half of a possum, and was sittin' on a log, smokin' a Kaintuck

regaly, and a talkin' to Brother Joe, who was a standin' chock up agin the fire, with his back to it. You recollex, Mrs. Harris, Brother Joe allers was a dressy sort of a chap—fond of brass buttons on his coat and the flaim'est kind of red neckerchers; and this time he had buckskin breeches, with straps under his boots. Well, when I was a talkin' to him ov the prospect fur the next day, all ov a sudden I thought the little feller was a growin' uncommon tall; till I diskivered that the buckskin breeches, that wur as wet as a young rooster in a spring rain, wur beginning to smoke and draw up kinder, and wur a liftin' Brother Joe off the ground.

"'Brother Joe,' sez I, 'you're a goin' up.'

"'Brother Bill,' sez he, 'I ain't a doin' anythin' else.'

"And he scrunched down mighty hard; but it warn't ov no use, fur afor long he wur a matter of some fifteen feet up in the air."

"Merciful powers," interrupted the widow.

"'Brother Joe,' sez I.

"'I'm here,' sez he.

"'Catch hold ov the top ov that black-jack,' sez I.

"'Talk!' sez Brother Joe, and he sorter leaned

over and grabbed the saplin', like as maybe you've seed a squ'el haul in an elm switch ov a June mornin'. But it warn't ov no use, fur, old 'omen, ef you'll believe me, it gradually begun to give way at the roots, and afore he'd got five foot higher, it jist slipped out er the ground, as easy as you'd pull up a spring reddish.

"'Brother Joe!' sez I agin.

"'I'm a list'nin',' sez he.

"'Cut your straps!' sez I, for I seed it was his last chance.

"Talk!' sez Brother Joe, tho' he looked sort a reproachful like at me fur broachin' such a subject; but arter apparently considerin' awhile, he outs with his jack-knife, an' leanin' over sideways, made a rip at the sole of his left foot. There was a considerable deal ov cracklin' fur a second or two, then a crash sorter like as if a waggon-load of wood had bruck down, and the fust thing I know'd, the t'other leg shot up like, and started him; and the last thing I seed ov Brother Joe, he was *a whirlin' round like a four-spoked wheel with the rim off, away overclost toward sundown!*"

XI.

GEORGIA THEATRICS.

If my memory fail me not, the 10th of June, 18— found me, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, ascending a long and gentle slope in what was called "The Dark Corner" of Lincoln. I believe it took its name from the moral darkness which reigned over that portion of the county at the time of which I am speaking. If in this point of view, it was but a shade darker than the county, it was inconceivably dark. If any man can name a trick or sin which had not been committed at the time of which I am speaking in the very focus of all the county's illumination (Lincolnton), he must himself

be the most inventive of the tricky, and the very Judas of sinners. Since that time, however (all humour aside), Lincoln has become a living proof "that light shineth in darkness." Could I venture to mingle the solemn with the ludicrous, even for the purposes of honourable contrast, I could adduce from this county instances of the most numerous and wonderful transitions, from vice and folly to virtue and holiness, which have ever perhaps been witnessed since the days of the Apostolic ministry.

So much, lest it should be thought by some that what I am about to relate is characteristic of the county in which it occurred.

Whatever may be said of the moral condition of the Dark Corner, at the time just mentioned, its natural condition was anything but dark. It smiled in all the charms of spring; and spring borrowed new charms from its undulating grounds, its luxuriant woodlands, its sportive streams, its vocal birds, and its blushing flowers.

Rapt with the enchantment of the season, and the scenery around me, I was slowly rising the slope, when I was startled by loud, profane, and boisterous voices, which seemed to proceed from a thick covert of undergrowth about two hundred

yards in the advance of me and about one hundred to the right of my road:

"You kin, kin you?"

"Yes, I kin, and am able to do it! Bo—oo—oo! Oh, wake snakes, and walk your chalks! Brimstone and fire! don't hold me, Nick Stoval! The fight's made up, and let's go at it. My soul, if I don't jump down his throat and gallop every chitterling out of him before you can say 'quit!'"

"Now, Nick, don't hold him. Jist let the wild cat come, and I'll tame him. Ned'll see me a fair fight, won't you Ned?"

"Oh yes, I'll see a fair fight, blame my old shoes if I don't."

"That is sufficient, as Tom Haynes said when he saw the elephant. Now let him come!"

Thus they went on, with countless oaths interspersed, which I dare not even hint at, and with much that I could not distinctly hear.

"In mercy's name," thought I, "what band of ruffians has selected this holy season and this heavenly retreat for such Pandemonian riots?"

I quickened my gait, and had come nearly opposite to the thick grove whence the noise proceeded, when my eye caught indistinctly and at intervals,

through the foliage of the dwarf oaks and hickories which intervened, glimpses of a man or men who seemed to be in a violent struggle, and I could occasionally catch those deep-drawn emphatic oaths which men in conflict utter when they deal blows. I dismounted, and hurried to the spot with all speed. I had overcome about half the space which separated it from me, when I saw the combatants come to the ground, and after a short struggle, I saw the uppermost one (for I could not see the other) make a heavy plunge with both his thumbs, and at the same instant I heard a cry:

"Enough! my eye's out!"

I was so completely horror-struck that I stood transfixed for a moment to the spot where the cry met me. The accomplices in the hellish deed which had been perpetrated had all fled at my approach; at least I supposed so, for they were not to be seen.

"Now, you old corn-shucking rascal," said the victor (a youth about eighteen years old), as he rose from the ground, "come cutt'n your shines 'bout me agin, next time I come to the Court House, will you? Get your owl eye in again, if you can."

At this moment he saw me for the first time. He looked excessively embarrassed, and was moving off, when I called to him in a tone emboldened by my office and the iniquity of his crime:

"Come back, you villain, and assist me in relieving your fellow-mortal, whom you have ruined for ever!"

My rudeness subdued his embarrassment in an instant, and with a taunting curl of the nose he replied:

"You needn't kick before you're spurred. There ain't nobody there, nor han't been nother. I was jist seein' how I could 'a fou't."

So saying, he bounded to his plough, which stood in the fence about fifty yards beyond the battle-ground.

And would you believe it, gentle reader, his report was true? All that I had heard and seen was nothing more or less than a Lincoln rehearsal, in which the youth who had just left me had played all the parts of all the characters in a Court House fight.

I went to the ground from which he had risen, and there were the prints of his two thumbs plunged

up to the balls in the mellow earth, about the distance of a man's eyes apart, and the ground around was broken up, as if two stags had been engaged upon it.

XII.

TAKING THE CENSUS.

Our next encounter was with an old lady, notorious in her neighbourhood for her garrulity and simple-mindedness. Her loquacity knew no bounds; it was constant, unremitting, interminable, and sometimes laughably silly. She was interested in quite a large Chancery suit, which had been dragging its slow length for several years, and furnished her with a conversational fund, which she drew upon extensively, under the idea that its merits could never be sufficiently discussed. Having been warned of her propensity, and being

somewhat hurried when we called upon her, we were disposed to get through business as soon as possible, and without hearing her enumeration of the strong points of her law case. Striding into the house, and drawing our papers:

"Taking the census, Ma'am," quoth we.

"Ah, well, yes! bless your soul, take a seat. Now do! Are you the gentlemen that Mr. Fillmore has sent out to take the censis? I wonder—well, good Lord, look down! how was Mr. Fillmore and family when you seed him?"

We told her we had never seen the President; didn't know him from a piece of sole-leather; "we had been written to to take the census."

"Well now, there agin! love your soul! Well, I s'pose Mr. Fillmore writ you a letter, did he? No! Well, God be praised, there's mighty little *here* to take down; times is hard, God's will be done! but looks like people can't get their rights in this country, and the law is all for the rich, and none for the poor, praise the Lord! Did you ever hear tell of that case my boys has got agin old Simpson? Looks like they will never get to the end on it, glory to His name! The children will

suffer, I'm mighty *afeard*, Lord give us grace! Did you ever see Judge B.? Yes! Well, the Lord preserve us! Did you ever hear him say what he's agwine to do in the boys' case agin Simpson? No! Good Lord! Well, Squire, *will* you ax him the next time you see him, and write me word, and tell him what I say? I'm nothing but a poor widow, and my boys has got no larnin', and old Simpson tuk 'em in. It's a mighty hard case, and the will ought never to a been broke, but—"

Here we interposed, and told the old lady that our time was precious—that we wished to take down the number of her family, and the produce raised by her last year, and be off. After a good deal of trouble, we got through with the description of the members of her family, and the "statistical table," as far as the article "cloth."

"How many yards of cotton cloth did you weave in 1850, Ma'am?"

"Well now, the Lord have mercy! less see. You know Sally Higgins that used to live in the Smith settlement? Poor thing! her daddy drove her off all on the 'count of Jack Miller, poor

creetur! poor gal! she couldn't help it, I dare say. Well, Sally she come to stay 'long wi' me when the old man druv her away, and she was a powerful good hand to weave, and I *did* think she'd help me a power. Well, arter she'd bin here awhile, her baby hit took sick, and Old Miss Stringer she undertook to help it. She's a powerful good hand, old Miss Stringer, on roots and yearbs and sich like! Well, the Lord look down from above! she made a sort of a tea, as I was a tellin', and she gin it to Sally's baby; it got wuss—the poor creetur—and she gin it tea, and looked like the more she gin it tea, the more—"

"My dear Madam, I'm in a hurry—please tell me how many yards of cotton you wove in 1850. I wan't to get through and go on."

"Well, well, the Lord have mercy! who'd a thought you'd a bin so snappish! Well, as I was a sayin', Sally's child it kept gittin' wus, and old Miss Stringer she kept a givin' it the yearb tea, till at last the child hit looked like hit would die anyhow. And 'bout the time the child was at its wust, Old Daddy Sikes he come along, and he said if we git some nightshed berries and stew them

with a little cream and some hog's lard. Now Old Daddy Sikes is a mighty fine old man, and he giv the boys a heap of mighty good counsel about that case.

"'Boys,' said he 'I'll tell you what you do; you go and—'"

"In the name of goodness, old lady," said we, "tell about your cloth; and let the sick child and Miss Stringer, Daddy Sikes, the boys, and the law-suit, go the Old Scratch. I'm in a hurry!"

"Gracious, bless your dear soul! don't git aggravated. I was jist a tellin' you how it come I didn't weave no cloth last year."

"Oh, well you didn't weave any cloth last year. Good! We'll go on to the next article."

"Yes; you see the child hit begun to swell and turn yaller, and hit kept a wallin' its eyes, and a moanin', and I know'd—"

"Never mind about the child—just tell me the value of the poultry you raised last year."

"Oh, well—yes—the chickens, you means. Why, the Lord love your poor soul; I reckon you never in your born days see a creetur have the luck that

I did—and looks like we never shall have any good luck agin; for ever since old Simpson tuk that case up to the Chancery Court—"

"Never mind the case, let's hear about the chickens, if you please."

"God bless you, honey! the owls destroyed in and about the best half that I did raise. Every blessed night that the Lord did send, they'd come and set on the comb of the house, and hoo, hoo; and one night in particklar I remember, I had just got up with the nightshed salve to 'int the little gal with—"

"Well, well, what was the value of what you did raise?"

"The Lord above look down! They got so bad —the owls did—that they tuk the old hens as well as the young chickens. The night I was a tellin' 'bout, I heard somethin's s-q-u-a-l-l! s-q-u-a-l-l! and says I: 'I'll bet that's old Speck, that nasty awdacious owl's got, for I see her go to roost with the chickens up in the plum-tree, forenenst the smoke-house.'

"So I went to whar old Miss Stringer was sleepin', and says I:

"'Miss Stringer! oh, Miss Stringer! sure's

you're born, that owl's got old Speck out'n the plum-tree.'

"Well, old Miss Stringer she turned over 'pon her side like, and says she:

"'What did you say, Miss Stokes?'

"And says I:—"

We began to get very tired, and signified the same to the old lady, and begged her to answer us directly, and without circumlocution.

"The Lord Almighty love your dear heart, honey, I'm tellin' you as fast I kin. The owls they got worse, and worse; after they'd swept old Speck and all *her* gang, they went to work on t'others; and Bryant (that's one of my boys), he 'lowed he'd shoot the pestersome creeturs. And so one night arter that we hearn one holler, and Bryant he tuk the old musket and went out, and sure enough there was owley (as he thought) a sittin' on the comb of the house, so he blazed away, and down come—what on airth *did* come down, do you reckon, when Bryant fired?"

"The owl, I suppose."

"No sich thing; no sich thing; the owl warn't thar. 'Twas my old house cat came a tumblin' down spittin', sputterin', and scratchin', and the fur

a flyin' every time she jumped, like you'd busted a feather-bed open. Bryant he said the way he come to shoot the cat, instead of the owl, he seed somethin' white—"

"For heaven's sake, Mrs. Stokes, give me the value of your poultry, or say you will not. Do one thing or the other."

"Oh, well, dear love your heart, I reckon I had last year nigh about the same as I've got this."

"Then tell me how many dollars' worth you have now, and the thing's settled."

"I'll let you see for yourself," said Widow Stokes; and taking an ear of corn between the logs of the cabin, and shelling off a handful, she commenced scattering the grain, all the while screaming or rather screeching: "Chick! chick! chick! chickee! chickee! chickee-ee!"

Here they came, roosters, hens, pullets, and little chicks; crowing, cackling, chirping, flying, and fluttering against her sides, pecking at her hands, and creating a din and confusion altogether indescribable. The old lady seemed delighted, thus to exhibit her feathered "stock," and would occasionally exclaim:

"A nice passel! ain't they a nice passel!"

But she never would say what they were worth, and no persuasion could bring her to the point. Our papers at Washington contain no estimate of the value of the Widow Stokes's poultry, though, as she said herself, she had a "mighty nice passel."

XIII.

A FAMILY PICTURE.*

Mr. Hill, in one of his many visits "down east," was belated one evening, and was compelled to seek shelter at a small farm-house. He thus describes the family party and the family doings on that evening.

The heads of the family were a Mr. and Mrs. Jones, who were honoured, on this occasion, with a visit from a plain sort of man, who told me, said Mr. Hill, that he teached school in winter, and hired out in haying time. What this man's name

* By G. H. Hill.

was, I do not exactly recollect. It might have been Smith, and for convenience sake, we will call him John Smith. This Mr. Smith brought a newspaper with him, which was printed weekly, which Mr. Jones said—as it did not agree with his politics—was a very weakly consarn.

Mr. Jones was seated one side of an old pine table, and Mr. Smith on the other. Mrs. Jones sat knitting in one corner, and the children under the fire-place—some cracking nuts, others whittling sticks, &c. Mr. Jones, after perusing the paper for some time, observed to Mrs. Jones, "My dear!"

Mrs. Jones. Well.

Mr. Jones. It appears.

Mrs. J. Well, go on.

Mr. J. I say, it appears.

Mrs. J. Well, law souls, I heard it; go on.

Mr. J. I say, it appears from a paragraph ——

Mrs. J. Well, it don't appear as if you were ever going to appear.

Mr. J. I say, it appears from a paragraph in this paper ——

Mrs. J. There—there you go again. Why on airth, Jones, don't you spit it out.

Mr. J. I say, it appears from a paragraph in this paper ——

Mrs. J. Well, I declare, Jones, you are enough to tire the patience of Job. Why on airth don't you out with it.

Mr. J. Mrs. Jones, will you be quiet. If you get my dander up, I'll raise Satan round this house, and you know it, tew. Mr. Smith you must excuse me. I'm obliged to be a little peremptory to my wife, for if you wasn't here she'd lick me like all natur. Well, as I said, it appears from this paper, that Seth Slope—you know'd Seth Slope, that used to be round here?

Mrs. J. Yes; well, go on; out with it.

Mr. J. Well, you know he went out in a whalin' voyage.

Mrs. J. Yes, well.

Mr. J. Well, it appears he was settin' on the stern, when the vessel give a lee lurch, and he was knocked overboard, and hain't written to his friends since that time.

Mrs. J. La, souls! you don't say so.

Before going further, I will endeavour to give you some idea of this Seth Slope. He was what

they term down east, "a poor shote;" his principal business was picking up chips, feeding the hogs, &c., &c. I will represent him with his hat. *(Puts on hat.)*

"Mrs. Jones says I don't know nothin', and Mr. Jones says I don't know nothin', (*laughs;*) and everybody says I don't know nothin'; and I say I *do* know nothin', (*laughs.*) Don't I pick up all the chips to make the fires? And don't I feed the hogs, and the ducks, and the hens? (*Laughs.*) And don't I go down to the store every morning, for a jug of rum? And don't I take a good suck myself? I don't know nothin'—ha—(*laughs.*) And don't I go to church every Sunday? and don't I go up stairs, and when the folks go to sleep, don't I throw corn on 'em to wake 'em up? And don't I see the fellers winking at the gals, and the gals winking at the fellers? And don't I go home and tell the old folk; and when they come home, don't the old folk kick up the darndest row? (*Laughs.*) And don't I drive the hogs out of the garden, to keep 'em from rooting up the taters? And don't I git asleep there, sometimes, and don't they root *me* up. (*Laughs.*) And didn't I see a fly on

Deacon Stoke's red nose, t'other day; and didn't I say, "Take care, Deacon Stokes, you'll burn his feet?" I don't know nothin', eh! (*Laughs.*)

This Mrs. Jones I have spoken of, was a very good kind of woman, and Mr. Jones was considered a very good sort of man; but was rather fond of the bottle. On one occasion, I recollect particularly, he had been to a muster, and came home so much intoxicated, that he could hardly stand, and was obliged to lean against the chimney-piece, to prevent himself from falling, and Mrs. Jones says to him, "Now, Jones, aint you ashamed of yourself? Where on airth do you think you'd go to, if you was to die in that sitiwation?"

Jones, (very drunk). Well, I don't know where I should go to; but I shouldn't go far, without I could go faster than I do now.

As soon as Mr. Jones had finished the paragraph in the paper, Mrs. Jones threw on her shawl, and went over to her neighbours to communicate the news. I will endeavour to give you an idea of Mrs. Jones, by assuming this shawl and cap. (*Puts on shawl and cap.*)

"Well, Mrs. Smith, I suppose you ain't heard the news?"

"La, no, what on airth is it?"

"You recollect Seth Slope, that used to be about here?"

"Yes, very well."

"You know he went a whalin' voyage?"

"Yes."

"Well, it appears, from an advartisement in the papers, that he was sittin' on the starn of the vessel, when the vessel give a lee lurch, that he was knocked overboard and was drowned, and that he has not written to his friends ever since. Oh, dear! it's dreadful to think on. Poor critter!—he was such a clever, good-natured, kind soul. I recollect when he was about here, how he used to come into the house and set down, and get up and go out, and come in agin, and set down, and get up and go out. Then he'd go down to the barn, and throw down some hay to the critters, and then he'd come into the house agin, and get up and go out, and go down to the store and get a jug of rum,—and sometimes he'd take a little suck of it himself. But, la, souls! I never cared nothing about that. Good, clever critter! Then arter he'd come back with the rum, he'd set down a little while, and get up and go out, and pick up chips, and drive the hogs out

of the garden; and then he'd come into the house and kick over the swill-pail, and set down, and stick his feet over the mantel-piece, and whittle all over the hearth, and spit tobacco juice all over the carpet, and make himself so *sociable*. And poor fellow! now he's gone. Oh, dear! how dreadful wet he must have got! Well, Mrs. Smith, it goes to show that we are all accountable *critters*."

XIV.

COLONEL JONES'S FIGHT.

A STORY OF KENTUCKY.

Col. Dick Jones was decidedly the great man of the village of Summerville. He was Colonel of the regiment—he had represented his district in Congress—he had been spoken of as candidate for Governor — he was at the head of the bar in Hawkins' county, Kentucky, and figured otherwise largely in public life. His legal opinion and advice were highly valued by the senior part of the population—his dress and taste were law to the juniors—his easy, affable, and attentive manner charmed all the matrons, his dignified politeness

captivated the young ladies—and his suavity and condescension delighted the little boarding-school misses. He possessed a universal smattering of information—his manners were the most popular; extremely friendly and obliging, lively and witty; and, in short, he was a very agreeable companion

Yet truth requires it to be admitted, that Col. Dick Jones was professionally more specious than deep, and that his political advancement was owing to personal partiality more than superior merit—that his taste and dress were of questionable propriety: for instance, he occasionally wore a hunting-shirt white fringed, or a red waistcoat, or a fawn-skin one, or a calico morning-gown of a small yellow pattern, and he indulged in other similar vagaries in clothing. And in manners and deportment, there was an air of harmless (true Virginian bred and Kentucky raised) self-conceit and swagger, which, though not to be admired, yet it gave piquancy and individuality to his character.

If further particulars are required, I can only state that the Colonel boarded at the Eagle hotel—office, in the square, fronted the court-house—he was a manager of all the balls—he was vice-

president of the Summerville Jockey Club—he was trustee of the Female Academy—he gallanted the old ladies to church, holding his umbrella over them in the sun, and escorted the young ladies, at night, to the dances or parties, always bringing out the smallest ones. He rode a high headed, proud-looking sorrel horse, with a streak down his face; and he was a general referee and umpire, whether it was a horse swap, a race, a rifle match, or a cock fight.

It so chanced, on a time, though Colonel Jones was one of the best-natured of men, that he took umbrage at some report circulated about him in an adjoining county and one of his districts, to the effect that he had been a federalist during the last war; and, instead of relying on the fact of his being a school-boy on Mill Creek at that time, he proclaimed, at the tavern table, that the next time he went over the mountain to court, Bill Patterson, the reputed author of the slander, should either sign a *liebill*, fight, or run.

This became narrated through the town,—the case and argument of the difference was discussed among the patriarchs of the place, who generally came to the conclusion that the colonel had good

cause of quarrel, as more had been said of him than an honourable man could stand. The young store boys of the village became greatly interested, conjectured how the fight would go, and gave their opinions what they would do under similar circumstances. The young lawyers, and young M.D.'s, as often as they were in the colonel's company, introduced the subject of the expected fight. On such occasions, the colonel spoke carelessly and banteringly. Some good old ladies spoke deprecatingly, in the general and in the particular, that so good and clever a young man as Colonel Dick should set so bad an example; and the young ladies, and little misses, bless their dear little innocent souls, they only consulted their own kind hearts, and were satisfied that he must be a wicked and bad man that Colonel Jones would fight.

Spring term of the courts came on, and the lawyers all started on their circuit, and, with them, Colonel Jones went over the mountain. The whole town was alive to the consequences of this trip, and without much communion or understanding on the subject, most of the population either gathered at the tavern at his departure, or noticed it

from a distance, and he rode off, gaily saluting his acquaintances, and raising his hat to the ladies, on both sides of the street, as he passed out of town.

From that time, only one subject engaged the thoughts of the good people of Summerville; and on the third day the common salutation was:

"Any news from over the mountain?"

"Has any one come down the road?"

The fourth, fifth, and sixth came, and still the public anxiety was unappeased: it had, with the delay, become insufferable, quite agonizing; business and occupation was at a stand still; a doctor or a constable would not ride to the country lest news of the fight might arrive in their absence. People in crossing the square, or entering or coming out of their houses, all had their heads turned up that road. And many, though ashamed to confess it, sat up an hour or two past their usual bed-time, hoping some one would return from court. Still all was doubt and uncertainty. There is an unaccountable perversity in these things that bothers conjecture. I watched the road from Louisville two days, to hear of Grey Eagle beating Wagner, on which I had one hundred dollars staked, of bor-

rowed money, and no one came; though before that, some person passed every hour.

On the seventh morning, the uneasy public were consoled by the certainty that the lawyers must be home that day, as court seldom held a week, and the universal resolve seemed to be that nothing was to be attended to until they were satisfied about the fight. Storekeepers and their clerks, saddlers, hatters, cabinet-makers, and their apprentices, all stood out at the doors. The hammer ceased to ring on the anvil, and the bar-keeper would scarcely walk in to put away the stranger's saddle-bags, who had called for breakfast; when suddenly a young man, that had been walking from one side of the street to the other, in a state of feverish anxiety, thought he saw dust away up the road, and stopped. I have been told a man won a wager in Philadelphia, on his collecting a crowd by staring, without speaking, at an opposite chimney. So no sooner was this young man's *point* noticed, than there was a regular reconnoissance of the road made, and before long, doubt became certainty, when one of the company declared he knew the colonel's old sorrel riding-horse, "General Jackson," by the blaze on his face.

In the excited state of the public mind it required no ringing of the court-house bell to convene the people; those down street walked up, and those across the square came over, and all gathered gradually at the Eagle hotel, and nearly all were present by the time Colonel Jones alighted. He had a pair of dark green specks on, his right hand in a sling, with brown paper bound round his wrist; his left hand held the bridle, and the forefinger of it wrapped with a linen rag "with care."

One of his ears was covered with a muslin scrap, that looked much like the countrywomen's plan of covering their butter when coming to market: his face was clawed all over, as if he had had it raked by a cat held fast by the tail; his head was unshorn, it being "too delicate an affair," as * * * said about his wife's character. His complexion suggested an idea to a philosophical young man present, on which he wrote a treatise, dedicated to Arthur Tappan, proving that the negro was only a white well pummelled; and his general swelled appearance would induce a belief he had led the forlorn hope in the storming of a bee-hive.

The Colonel's manner did not exactly proclaim "the conquering hero," but his affability was undiminished, and he addressed them with:

"Happy to see you, gents; how are you all?" and then attempted to enter the tavern; but Buck Daily arrested him with:

"Why, Colonel, I see you have had a skrimmage. How did you make it? You didn't come out at the little *eend* of the horn, did you?"

"No, not exactly, I had a tight fit of it, though. You know Bill Patterson; he weighs one hundred and seventy-five pounds, has not an ounce of superfluous flesh, is as straight as an Indian, and as active as a wild-cat, and as quick as powder, and very much of a man, I assure you. Well, my word was out to lick him; so I hardly put up my horse before I found him at the court-house door, and, to give him a white man's chance, I proposed alternatives to him. He said his daddy, long ago, told him never to give a *liebill*, and he was not good at running, so he thought he had best fight. By the time the word was fairly out, I hauled off, and took him in the burr of the ear that raised a singing in his head, that made him think he was in Mosquitoe town. At it we went, like killing

snakes, so good a man, so good a boy; we had it round and round, and about and about, as dead a yoke as ever pulled at a log-chain. Judge Mitchell was on the bench, and as soon as the cry of "fight" was raised, the bar and jury ran off and left him. He shouted, 'I command the peace,' within the court-house, and then ran out to see the fight, and cried out, 'I can't prevent you!' 'fair fight!' 'stand back!' and he caught parson Benefield by the collar of the coat, who, he thought, was about to interfere, and slung him on his back at least fifteen feet.

"It was the evenest and longest fight ever fought: everybody was tired of it, and I must admit, in truth, that I was" (*here he made an effort to enter the tavern.*) But several voices called out:

"Which whipped? How did you come out?"

"Why, much as I tell you; we had it round and round, about and about, over and under. I could throw him at rastle, but he would manage some way to turn me. Old Sparrowhawk was there, who had seen all the best fighting at Natchez, under the hill, in the days of Dad Girty

and Jim Snodgrass, and he says my gouging was beautiful; one of Bill's eyes is like the mouth of an old ink-bottle, only, as the fellow said, describing the jackass by the mule, it is more so. But, in fact, there was no great choice between us, as you see. I look like having ran into a brush fence of a dark night. So we made it round and round, about and about"—(*here again he attempted a retreat into the tavern.*)

But many voices demanded, "Who hollored?"

"Which gave up?"

"How did you hurt your hand?"

"Oh! I forgot to tell you, that as I aimed a sockdollager at him he ducked his head, and he can dodge like a diedapper, and hitting him awkwardly, I sprained my wrist; so, being like the fellow who, when it rained mush, had no spoon, I changed the suit, and made a trump—and went in for eating. In the scuffle we fell, cross and pile, and, finding his appetite good for my finger, I adopted Doctor Bones', the toolsmith's, patent method of removing teeth without the aid of instruments, and I extracted two of his incisors, and released my finger. However, I shall, for some time, have an excuse for

wearing gloves without being thought proud." (*He now tried to escape under cover of a laugh.*)

But vox populi again.

"So you tanned him, did you?"

"How did the fight finish?"

"You were not parted?"

"You fought it out, did you?"

The colonel resumed, "Why, there is no telling how the fight might have gone; an old Virginian, who had seen Francesco, and Otey, and Lewis, and Blevins, and all the best men of the day, said he had never seen any one stand up to their fodder better than we did. We had fought round and round, and about and about, all over the court-yard, and, at last, just to end the fight, every body was getting tired of it; so, at l—a—a—s—t, I hollored."—(*Exit Colonel.*)

XV.

THE FASTEST FUNERAL ON RECORD.*

I HAD just crossed the long bridge leading from Boston to Cambridgeport, and was plodding my dusty way on foot through that not very agreeable suburb, on a sultry afternoon in July, with a very creditable thunder-cloud coming up in my rear, when a stout elderly gentleman, with a mulberry face, a brown coat, and pepper-and-salt smalls, reined up his nag, and after learning that I was bound for Old Cambridge, politely invited me to take a seat beside him in the little sort of tax-cart he was driving. Nothing loth, I consented, and

* By F. A. Durivage, of Boston.

we were soon *en route*. The mare he drove was a very peculiar animal. She had few good points to the eye, being heavy-bodied, hammer-headed, thin in the shoulders, bald-faced, and rejoicing in a little stump of a tail which was almost entirely innocent of hair. But there were "lots of muscle," as Major Longbow says, in her hind quarters.

"She aint no Wenus, Sir," said my new acquaintance, pointing with his whip to the object of my scrutiny—"but handsome is as handsome does. Them's my sentiments. She's a rum 'un to look at, but a good 'un to go."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, *Sir!* That there mare, Sir, has made good time—I may say, *very* good time before the hearse."

"Before the hearse?"

"Before the hearse! S'pose you never heard of *burying a man on time!* I'm a sexton, Sir, and undertaker—Jack Crossbones, at your service—'Daddy Crossbones' they call me at Porter's."

"Ah! I understand. Your mare ran away with the hearse."

"Ran away! A child could hold her. Oh! yes, of course she ran away," added the old gentle-

man, looking full in my face with a very quizzical expression, and putting the fore finger of his right hand on the right side of his party-coloured proboscis.

"My dear Sir," said I, "you have excited my curiosity amazingly, and I should esteem it as a particular favour if you would be a little less oracular and a little more explicit."

"I don't know as I'd ought to tell you," said my new acquaintance very slowly and tantalizingly. "If you was one of these here writing chaps, you might poke it in the 'Spirit of the Times,' and then it would be all day with me. But I don't care if I do make a clean breast of it. Honour bright, you know."

"Of course."

"Well, then, I live a piece up beyond Old Cambridge—you can see our steeple off on a hill to the right, when we get a little further. Well, one day, I had a customer (he was carried off by typhus) which had to be toted into town—cause why? he had a vault there. So I rubbed down the old mare, and put her in the fills. Ah! Sir! that critter knows as much as an Injun, and more than a Nigger. She's as sober as a judge when she gets the shop—that's

what I call the hearse—behind her. You would not think she was a three-minute nag, to look at her. Well, Sir, as luck would have it, by a sort of providential inspiration, the day before, I'd took off the old wooden springs and set the body on elliptics. For I thought it a hard case that a gentleman who'd been riding easy all his life, should go to his grave on wooden springs. Ah! I deal well by my customers. I thought of patent boxes to the wheels, but *I* couldn't afford it, and the parish are desperate stingy.

"Well, I got him in, and led off the string—fourteen hacks, and a dearbourn wagon at the tail of the funeral. We made a fine show. As luck would have it, just as we came abreast of Porter's, out slides that eternal torment, Bill Sikes, in his new trotting sulky, with the brown horse that he bought for a fast crab, and *is* mighty good for a rush, but hain't got nigh so much bottom as the mare. Bill's light weight, and his sulky's a mere feather. Well, Sir, Bill came up alongside, and walked his horse a bit. He looked at the mare and then at me, and then he winked. Then he looked at his nag and put his tongue in his cheek, and winked. I looked straight ahead,

and only said to myself, 'Cuss you, Bill Sikes.' By and bye, he let his horse slide. He travelled about a hundred yards, and then held up till I came abreast, and then he winked and bantered me again. It was aggravatin', that's a fact. Says I to myself, says I: 'That's twice you've done it, my buzzum friend and sweet-scented shrub—but you doesn't do that 'ere again.' The third time he bantered me I let him have it. It was only saying, 'Scat you brute,' and she was off—that mare. He had all the odds, you know, for I was toting a two hundred pounder, and he ought to have beat me like breaking sticks, now hadn't he? He had me at the first brush, for I told you the brown horse was a mighty fast one for a little ways. But soon I lapped him. I had no whip, and he could use his string—but he had his hands full.

"Side by side, away we went—rattle-te-bang! crack! abuz! thump!—and I afraid of losing my customer on the road; but I was more afraid of losing the race. The reputation of the old mare was at stake, and I swore she should have a fair chance. We went so fast that the posts and rails by the road side looked like a log fence. The old church and the new one, and the colleges, spun past like Merry-Andrews.

"The hackmen did not know what was to pay, and, afraid of not being in at the death, they put the string on to their teams, and came clattering on behind as if Satan had kicked 'em on eend. Some of the mourners was sporting characters, and they craned out of the carriage windows and waved their handkerchiefs. The President of Harvard College himself, inspired by the scene, took off his square tile as I passed his house, and waving it three times round his head, cried:

"'Go it, Boots!'

"It *is a* fact. And I beat him, Sir! I beat him, in three miles, a hundred rods. He gin it up, Sir, in despair."

"His horse was off his feed for a week, and when he took to corn again he wasn't worth a straw. It was acknowledged on all hands to be the fastest funeral on record, though I say it as shouldn't. I'm an undertaker, sir, and I never yet was overtaken."

On subsequent inquiry at Porter's, where the sporting sexton left me, I found that his story was strictly true in all the main particulars. A terrible rumpus was kicked up about the race, but Crossbones swore lustily that the mare had run away—that he had sawed away two inches of her lip in

trying to hold her up, and that he could not have done otherwise, unless he had run her into a fence and spilled his "customer" into the ditch. If any one expects to die anywhere near the sexton's *diggings*, I can assure them that the jolly old boy is still alive and kicking, the very "Ace of Hearts" and "Jack of Spades," and that now both patent boxes and elliptic springs render his professional conveyance the easiest running thing on the road.

XVI.

OLD TUTTLE'S LAST QUARTER RACE.

As a matter of course a quarter race never goes off without old Tuttle being thar—and he never attends without doing some business! So on Thursday he makes his appearance on the track, on a bay gelding, (with white hind feet,) which he calls "Indian Dick," and allows he's as good a scrub as there'll be on the ground! As old T. is *known*, and Dick has been heard of, the boys are rather shy—but one of them thinks he's got a scrub that's "some pumpkins!" and would like to know, without too much cost, how far Dick can beat him; he,

therefore, proposes to run them three hundred yards, for "sucks all round." Old T. understands the game, and says:

"No, I don't want yer to treat this crowd, but I'll run with yer just to show *yer hoss* can't run!"

This was what H. wanted, as he thought he could tell the speed of a horse, even tho' old T. did ride him; so back they go to the score, and are off—with (as might be expected) H. a-head, and old T. in the rear, whipping and spurring like mad, and letting his horse go just fast enough to put H. at about the top of his speed—but he can't *quite* come it.

"H.'s horse is too smart and can beat him every inch of the road."

So says H., and most of the crowd are of the same opinion.

Old T. says he believes he can beat H. Saturday, as "Dick's shoes are loose, and heavy, and he can't run in 'em."

There was nothing more said about it, till old Tut made his appearance next morning, when the boys were after him with "Sharp Sticks" and "Hot Bricks." One wanted to bet him a horse on H.'s

colt, *versus* his Indian Dick—another a V., another an X., and so on.

"Hold yer hosses b'hoys! Don't be all after the old man at wunst. Wait a while and he'll commerdate yer! He's an old man, and b'lieves he knows mor'n all on yer; but he don't want all yer money at wunst. He wants to be *onatel* with yer, so he can cum agin."

This course didn't set them back any, as they thought the old man was *scary*, and they were after him the faster.

Some of the more wary cautioned them to look out, but they *didn't want no caution—they knew what they was about*. They could beat old Tuttle, and they were going to "do the State some service" by skinning him. They'd make the "old cuss" poor afore they left him!

He took it all very coolly, advised some of them to save their money for the next time. He was an old man and b'lieved he knowed more 'n all on 'em. *His father* didn't teach him for nothin' sixty-five years ago! But the boys said that was all gass to scare them off; but 'twouldn't work! The old cuss had got to be skinned or back out.

The result was, they got up a horse and fifty

dollars a side, to run on Saturday, at two o'clock, each one to start and ride his own horse, judge tops and bottoms—the winning horse take the cakes—and no back out. Either party refusing to run forfeits the whole stakes.

Things went on smooth that day—some thinking old T. was playing some game with the boys, but what it was, no one could tell. However, before night, it was known there was *a secret* among the boys. They knew the speed of Dick, and knew they could slay him; but there mustn't anything be said about it, as when they got the old man on the track and right, they were going into him the whole amount of his fixins. They'd caught the old man napping once. They'd got a plaguy sight faster horse than he thought for, and now they were going to pay off old scores.

Two o'clock came, and found old T. on the spot leading Dick round, and telling the boys they'd be surprised when they see Dick run his best—at the same time "doing what *business* offered," but somehow the boys appeared a little *scary*. Old T. was "on hand" for every offer, and no mistake; and 'twas known he never bet liberally, unless he "had a sure thing." So that the betting soon

began to lag, and the old man had the call, but no takers. Finally the old man said:

"I've got a little more money, b'hoys, and I wouldn't mind givin' you a chance at two to one for it."

But this set them *clar back*—no one dare *bite*. There not appearing any more chance for investment, the old man stripped off his hat, coat, vest, and boots, tied a red cotton bandanna around his head (as an old man only can tie it), then pulls off the cloths and saddle from Dick, and mounts *bare-back*, declaring himself ready.

He mounted, and the word was given to "clear the track!"

Then Old T. says: "Are yer ready?"

"Yes."

"Go along then!"

And over the score they go, H. a length ahead. But, oh! Jeminy! see Dick run! Before you could turn round twice, the ends of Old T.'s bandanna were pointing out the road for H., and at the outcome Dick was one, H. nowhere.

Anybody that has seen a "quarter-horse" run by a "dunghill" knows how this was—no one else can appreciate it—the thing was out. Old T. really

knew more than all of them, sure enough; but what was the secret, and how could those in the secret be so stuck? That's the idea.

The secret was, "the boys" stole Old Tuttle's horse on Thursday night, and run him with H.'s horse, and *beat him easy.* And the way they were stuck was this: The old man supposing that they would steal his horse that night, and run him, had put Dick's cloths on another horse of the same colour and marks, and about the same size, and put him in Dick's stall, starting a shoe, so that if they run him they would lose it, and he should know they had taken the bait good. In the morning the shoe was gone.

XVII.

SPEECH ON THE OREGON QUESTION.*

"WHOIA! here I am, and intend, in a very few and expressive terms, to speak my sentiments. Mr. Speaker, I have come all the way from Oregon, to see, in behalf of my afflicted neighbours, who live a considerable distance apart, and I want to know, what in thunder you're about here, in this comfortable location, while your fellow-countrymen, who are not allowed to emigrate north of the Columbia River, on account of a raging he-calf who is bla-ting

* By G. H. Hill.

on the other side; but, thunder and squashes! can this be borne? No! Can the free inhabitants, who have emigrated there with the full belief that protection was to be extended to them from the great republic, bear the yoke of British law and British tyranny? *No, Sir!* we expect you to guard us from the sneers and insults of savages subject and give us aid, and to plant the standard of our country immutably on the 54—40, and, if anything, a leetle north.

"Powder and gun-flints! must we give up what is clearly proved by many of our great men—and though not set down in Webster's Spelling Book—to belong to us? will any man, who has pure American blood coursing through his veins, say let it go, 'cause we're afraid to fight? No, Sir! no! it is not in the natur of *Liberty boys* to allow any usurpation of our rights; let us be guided by Crockett's motto: '*First, be sure your right, then go ahead.*'

"I've killed four horses, worn out three pair of trousers and a pair of saddle-bags, besides spending all my money to come here, and I must know before I go back, which way the cat *jumps*, or both

countries shall hear from me, to their entire satisfaction, sooner or later. I've left my grandmother, father, wife, three children, six cows, two hosses, eighteen sheep, a gross of turkeys, geese, hens, chickens, a black dog, and a grey cat, who fondly look for my return, and I wish to know, without the shadow of a doubt, whether we are to be protected, or not, by this government, or are we tew be trampled under the iron hoofs of Europe's roaring Bull. We are strong and true at heart for our country, but we are as yet too few in number to offer just resistance. Give us a chance for a few years, however, and we will then look out for ourselves.

"Yet the time is not far off, when the locomotive will be steaming its way to the Rocky Mountains, with a mighty big train of cars running after it. Yes, the whistle of the engine will echo through the South-west Pass, and sharply hint to the free people of that great territory the approach of hundreds and thousands tew, who are to be their neighbours. No, Sir, the time is not far distant, when our commerce with China will equal that of all the world; when the Pacific Ocean will be

crossed with as much ease as the Frog pond on Boston Common.

"Yes, Mr. Speaker, as my eloquent friend from the Hoosier State remarks: 'Men of blood, and friends of General Washington, and that old hoss, General Jackson, I want your attention. *Lightnin'* has burst upon us; and Jupiter has poured out the ile of his wrath. Thunder has broke loose and slipped its cable, and is now rattling down the mighty Valley of the Mississippi, accompanied by the music of the alligator's hornpipe. Citizens and fellers; on the bloody ground on which our fathers catawampously poured out their claret free as ile, to enrich the soil over which we now honour and watch with hyena eyes, let the catamount of the inner varmint loose and prepare the engines of vengeance, for the long looked-for day has come. The crocodile of the Mississippi has gone into his hole, and the sun that lit King David and his host across the Atlantic Ocean, looks down upon the scene, and drops a tear to its memory.'

"I am with you, and while the stars of Uncle Sam, and the stripes of his country, triumph and float in the breeze, whar, whar is the craven, low-

lived, chicken-bred, toad-hoppin', red-mouthed mother's son of ye who will not raise the beacon-light of triumph, smouse the citadel of the aggressor, and press onward to liberty and glory? Wha-ah! Hurrah! where's the inimy?"

XVIII.

BILL DEAN, THE TEXAN RANGER.*

RARE wags may be found among the Texas Volunteers, yet the funniest fellow of all is a happy-go-lucky chap named Bill Dean, one of Chevallier's spy company, and said to be one of the best "seven-up" players in all Texas. While at Corpus Christi, a lot of us were sitting out on the stoop of the Kinney House, early one morning, when along came Bill Dean. He did not know a single soul in the crowd, although he knew we were all bound for the Rio Grande; yet the fact that

* By G. W. Kendall.

the regular formalities of an introduction had not been gone through with, did not prevent his stopping short in his walk and accosting us. His speech, or harangue, or whatever it may be termed, will lose much in the telling, yet I will endeavour to put it upon paper in as good a shape as possible.

"Oh, yes," said he, with a knowing leer of the eye: "oh, yes; all going down among the robbers on the Rio Grande, are you? Fine times *you'll* have, over the left. I've been there myself, and done what a great many of you won't do—I come back; but if I didn't see nateral h—ll—in August at that—I *am* a teapot. Lived eight days on one poor hawk and three blackberries—couldn't kill a prairie rat on the whole route to save us from starvation. The ninth day come, and we struck a small streak of good luck—a horse give out and broke down, plumb out in the centre of an open prairie—not a stick big enough to tickle a rattlesnake with, let alone killing him. Just had time to save the critter by shootin' him, and that was all, for in three minutes longer he'd have died a nateral death. It didn't take us long to butcher him, nor to cut off some chunks of meat and stick

'em on our ramrods; but the cookin' was another matter. I piled up a heap of prairie grass, for it was high and dry, and sot it on fire; but it flashed up like powder, and went out as quick. But—"

"But," put in one of his hearers, "but how did you cook your horse-meat after that?"

"How?"

"Yes, how?"

"Why, the fire caught the high grass close by, and the wind carried the flames streakin' across the prairie. I followed up the fire, holding my chunk of meat directly over the blaze, and the way we went it was a caution to anything short of locomotive doin's. Once in a while a little flurry of wind would come along, and the fire would get a few yards the start; but I'd brush upon her, lap her with my chunk, and then we'd have it again, nip and chuck. You never seed such a tight race—it was beautiful."

"Very, we've no doubt," ejaculated one of the listeners, interrupting the mad wag just in season to give him a little breath: "but did you cook your meat in the end?"

"Not bad I didn't. I chased that d—d fire a

mile and a half, the almightiest hardest race you ever heer'd tell on, and never give it up until I run her right plump into a wet marsh: there the fire and chunk of horse-meat came out even—a dead heat, especially the meat."

"But wasn't it cooked?" put in another one of the listeners.

"Cooked!—no!—just crusted over a little. You don't cook broken-down horse-flesh very easy, no how; but when it comes to chasing up a prairie fire with a chunk of it, I don't know which is the toughest, the meat or the job. You'd have laughed to split yourself to have seen me in that race—to see the fire leave me at times and then to see me brushin' up on her agin, humpin' and movin' myself as though I was runnin' agin some of those big ten mile an hour Gildersleeves in the old States. But I'm a goin' over to Jack Haynes's to get a cocktail and some breakfast—I'll see you all down among the robbers on the Rio Grande."

XIX.

THE FIRE-HUNT.

SAMUEL SIKES was one of the most inveterate hunters I ever knew. He delighted in no other pursuit or pastime, and though he pretended to cultivate a small spot of ground, yet so large a portion of his time was spent in the pursuit of game, that his agricultural interests suffered much for the want of proper attention. He lived a few miles from town, and as you passed his house, which stood a short distance from the main road, a few acres of corn and a small patch of potatoes might probably attract your notice as standing greatly in need of the hoe; but the most prominent

objects about Sam's domicile pertained to his favourite pursuit. A huge pair of antlers—a trophy of one of his proudest achievements—occupied a conspicuous place on the gable end; some ten or a dozen tall fishing-poles, though modestly stowed behind the chimney, projected far above the roof of the little cabin, and upon its unchinked walls, many a 'coon and deer-skin were undergoing the process of drying. If all these did not convince you that the proprietor was a sportsman, the varied and clamorous music of a score of hungry-looking hounds, as they issued forth in full cry at every passer-by, could not fail to force the conviction.

Sam had early found a companion to share with him his good or ill luck, and though he was yet on the green side of thirty, he was obliged to provide for some five or six little tallow-faced "responsibilities;" so he not only followed the chase from choice, but when his wife—who hated "fisherman's luck" *worse* than Sam did a "miss" or a "nibble"—took him to account for spending so many broken days, Saturday afternoons, rainy days and odd hours, to say nothing of whole nights, in the woods, without bringing home so much as a cut-squirrel or

horney-head, his ready reply was, that he was "'bleeged" to do the best he could to get meat for her and the "childer."

The Fire-Hunt was Sam's hobby, and though the legislature had recently passed an act prohibiting that mode of hunting, he continued to indulge, as freely as ever, in his favourite sport, resolutely maintaining that the law was "unconstitootional and agin reason." He had often urged me to accompany him, just to see how "slick" he could shine a buck's eyes; and such were the glowing accounts he had from time to time given me of his achievements in that way, that he had drawn from me a promise to go with him "some of these times."

I was sitting one evening, after tea, upon the steps of the porch, enjoying the cool autumnal breeze, when my friend Sam Sikes suddenly made his appearance. He had come for me to go with him on a fire-hunt, and was mounted on his mule Blaze, with his pan upon one shoulder, and his musket on the other. Determined to have everything in readiness before calling on me, he had gone to the kitchen and lit a few light-wood splinters, which were now blazing in his pan, and

which served the double purpose of lighting him through the enclosure, and of demonstrating to me the manner of hunting by night. As he approached the house, his light discovered me where I was sitting.

"Good evenin', Major," said he, "I've come out to see if you've a mind to take a little hunt to-night."

"I believe not, Mr. Sikes," I replied, feeling entirely too well satisfied with my pleasant seat in the cool breeze, to desire to change it for a night-ramble through the woods. "Not to-night, I thank you—it looks like rain."

"Oh, 'shaw, 'taint gwine to rain, nohow—and I'm all fixed—come, come along, Major."

As he spoke, he rode close to the porch, and his mule made several efforts to crop the shrubbery that grew by the door, which Sam very promptly opposed.

"How far are you going, Mr. Sikes?" I inquired, endeavouring to shake off the lazy fit which inclined me to keep my seat.

"Only jest up the branch a little bit—not beyant a mile from your fence, at the outside. Look at him!" he exclaimed in a louder tone, as he gave

the reins a jerk. "Thar's deer a plenty up at the forks, and we'll have r'al sport. Come, you better go, and—Why, look at him!" giving the reins another jerk, at the same time that he sent a kick to his mule's ribs that might have been heard an hundred yards, "and I'll show you how to shine the eyes of a buck."

As he sat in his saddle persuading me to go, his mule kept frisking and turning in such a manner as to annoy him exceedingly. Upon his left shoulder he bore his blazing-pan, and upon his right he held his musket, holding the reins also in his right hand; so that any efforts on his part to restrain the refractory movements of his animal was attended with much difficulty. I had about made up my mind to go, when the mule evinced a more resolute determination to get at the shrubbery.

"Whoa! wha, now!—confound you! Now, look at him!"—then might be heard a few good lusty kicks. "Come, Major, git your gun, and let's—will you hold up yer head, you 'bominable fool?—and let's take a little round—it'll do you good."

"As I only go to satisfy my curiosity, I'll not take a gun. You will be able to shoot all the deer we meet."

"Well, any way you mind, Major."

We were about to start, when suddenly the mule gave a loud bray, and when I turned to look, his heels were high in the air, and Sam clinging to his neck, while the fire flew in every direction. The mule wheeled, reared and kicked, and still Sam hung to his neck, shouting, "Look at him!—whoa! —will you mind!—whoa!—whoa, now!"—but all to no purpose, until at length the infuriated animal backed to the low paling fence which enclosed a small flower-garden, over which he tumbled—Sam, pan, gun and all, together!

When Sam had disengaged himself, he discovered that the saddle-blanket was on fire, which had been the cause of the disaster.

"Cus the luck," said he; "I thought I smelt something burnin'."

Then addressing himself to the mule in a louder tone, he continued:

"That's what comes o' jerkin' yer dratted head about that-a-way. Dod drot you, you've split all my fixins—and here's my pan, jest as crooked as a fish-hook!"

Then there was a kick or two, and a blow with the frying-pan:

"Take that, you howdacious fool, and hold yer head still next time, will you? And you've skinned my leg all to flinders, dadfetch your everlastin' picter to dingnation! Take that under your short ribs, now, will you? Whoa! I've a great mind to blow yer brains out this very night! And you've broke the Major's palins down, you unnatural cus. Whoa! step over now, if you's satisfied."

By this time Sam had got the mule out of the inclosure, and had gathered up most of his "fixins." The whole scene, after the upsetting of the pan, had transpired in the dark, but from the moment I saw the mule's heels flying, and Sam clinging to his neck, it was with the utmost difficulty I restrained my laughter. During his solo in the inclosure, I was absolutely compelled to stuff my handkerchief in my mouth, to prevent his hearing me.

"Did you ever see the likes o' that, Major?" exclaimed Sam, as I approached the spot where he was engaged in readjusting his saddle and putting other matters to rights that had been deranged by the struggles of the mule to free himself from the burning blanket.

"I am very sorry it happened," I replied, "as it will prevent us from taking our hunt."

"No, I'll be dadfetcht if it does, tho'—I ain't to be backed out that-a-way, Major, not by no means. You know, 'a bad beginnin' makes a good endin',' as the old woman said. He isn't done sich a monstrous sight o' harm, nohow—only bent the handle of my pan a little, and raked some skin off one o' my shins—but that's neither here nor thar. So if you'll jest hold Blaze till I go and git a torch, we'll have a shoot at a pair o' eyes yit, to-night."

I took the bridle, while Sam procured a torch, and after he had gathered up the faggots which he had brought to burn in his pan, we set off for the branch—Sam upon his mule, with a torch in one hand, while I walked by his side.

It was only necessary for us to go a short distance, before we were at the designated spot.

"Thar," said Sam, as he dismounted, "here's as good a place as any; so I'll jest hitch Blaze here, and light our pan."

Accordingly, Blaze was made fast to a stout sapling, and Sam proceeded to kindle a fire in his

pan, at the same time explaining to me, in a low voice, the *modus operandi* of the Fire-Hunt, which he accompanied with sundry precautionary hints and directions for my own especial observance on the present occasion.

"Now, Major," said he, "you must keep close to me, and you mustn't make no racket in the bushes. You see, the way we does to shine the deer's eyes is this—we holds the pan so, on the left shoulder, and carries the gun at a trail in the right hand. Well, when I wants to look for eyes, I turns round slow, and looks right at the edge of my shadder, what's made by the light behind me in the pan, and if ther's a deer in gun-shot of me, his eyes 'll shine 'zactly like two balls of fire."

This explanation was as clear as Sam could make it, short of a demonstration, for which purpose we now moved on through the woods. After proceeding a few hundred yards, Sam took a survey as described, but saw no eyes.

"Never mind, Major," said he, "we'll find 'em —you see."

We moved on cautiously, and Sam made his observations as before, but with no better suc-

cess. Thus we travelled on in silence, from place to place, until I began to get weary of the sport.

"Well, Mr. Sikes," I remarked, "I don't see that your bad beginning to-night is likely to insure any better ending."

"Oh, don't git out of patience, Major—you'll see."

We moved on again. I had become quite weary, and fell some distance behind. Sam stopped, and when I came up, he said, in a low voice:

"You better keep pretty close up, Major, 'case if I should happen to shine your eyes, you see, I moughtn't know 'em from a deer, and old Betsey here toats fifteen buckshot and a ball, and slings 'em to kill."

I fell behind no more.

We had wandered about for several hours, and the sky, which had not been the clearest in the commencement, now began to assume the appearance of rain. I had more than once suggested the propriety of going home—but Sam was eager to show me how to shine the eyes of a buck, and no argument or persuasion could win him from his purpose. We searched on as before for

another half hour, and I was about to express my determination to go home, when Sam suddenly paused:

"Stop, stop," said he; "thar's eyes, and whappers they is, too. Now hold still, Major."

I raised on tiptoe with eager anticipation—I heard the click of the lock—there was a moment of portentous silence—then the old musket blazed forth with a thundering report, and in the same instant was heard a loud squeal, and a noise like the snapping of bridle reins.

"Thunder and lightnin'!" exclaimed Sam, as he dropped gun, pan and all, and stood fixed to the spot—"I've shot old Blaze!"

So soon as he had recovered from the shock, we hastened to the spot, and, sure enough, there lay the luckless mule, still floundering in the agonies of death. The aim had been but too good, and poor Blaze was hurt "past all surgery." Sam stood over him in silent agony, and, notwithstanding the bitter maledictions he had so recently heaped upon him, now that he saw the poor animal stretched upon the ground in death, and knew that his "infernal picter" would greet him no more for ever, a flood of tender recollections of past services poured

over his repentant heart. He uttered not a word until after the last signs of life were extinct—then, with a heavy sigh, he muttered:

"Pore old cretur!—well, well, I reckon I's done the business now, sure enough. That's what I calls a *pretty* night's work, anyhow!"

"A 'bad beginning doesn't always make a good ending,' Mr. Sikes," I remarked.

"Cus the luck, it will run so sometimes," said he in a sullen tone, as he commenced taking the saddle off his deceased donkey. "I'm blamed if I see how I got so turned round."

By this time it had commenced to rain, and we were anxious to get home; but Sam had dropped his gun and pan, as the awful truth rushed upon him, that he had killed the only mule he possessed in the world, and we now found it difficult to recover them. After searching about for near half an hour in the drizzling rain, Sam chanced to come upon the spot from which he had taken the hapless aim, and having regained his gun and pan, we endeavoured to strike a fire; all our efforts, however, to produce a light, proved ineffectual, and we essayed to grope our way amid the darkness.

"Hello, Major, whar is you?"

"Here!"

"Whar you gwine?"

"Home!"

"Well, that ain't the way."

"Why, we came this way."

"No, I reckon not."

"I'm sure we didn't come that way."

"Whar, in the devil's name, is the branch?" petulantly inquired Sam. "If I could only see the branch, I could soon find the way."

"It must be down this way," I replied.

"Somehow or other I'm tetotiatiously deluded, to-night," remarked Sam, as he came tearing through the briers with his stirrup-irons dangling about him, his gun in one hand and frying-pan in the other. "If I hadn't a been completely dumfoozled, I'd never a killed Blaze like I did."

I volunteered to carry his gun, but he was in no humour for the interchange of civilities—"still harping" on his mule, he trudged on, grumbling to himself—

"What," he muttered, "will Polly say now—I'll never hear the last of that critter the longest

day I live. That's worse than choppin' the coon-tree across the sittin' hen's nest, and I liked never to hearn the eend o' that."

After groping through the brush and briers, which seemed to grow thicker the farther we proceeded, for some time, Sam stopped.

"I swar, Major, this ain't the way."

"Well, then, lead the way, and I'll follow you," I replied, beginning, myself, to think I was wrong.

Changing our direction, we plodded on, occasionally tumbling over logs and brush, until Sam concluded that all our efforts to find the way were useless.

"Oh, thunderation!" said he, as he tore away from a thick jungle of briers in which he had been rearing and pitching for more than a minute, "it ain't no manner of use for us to try to find the way, Major—so let's look out a big tree, and stop under it till morning."

Seeing no alternative, I reluctantly acceded to his proposal.

Accordingly, we nestled down under the shelter of a large oak. For a time neither spoke, and all was still, save the incessant buz of the countless

hosts of mosquitoes that now seemed intent upon devouring us. At length I broke silence, by remarking—at the same time that I gave myself a box upon the ear, intended for the mosquitoe that was biting me:

"I think this will be my last fire-hunt, Mr. Sikes."

"The fact is," replied Sam, "this 'ere ain't very incouragin' to new beginners, Major, that's a fact—but you musn't give it up so. I hope we'll have a better showin' next time."

"My curiosity is satisfied," I remarked. "I wouldn't pass such another night in the woods for all the deer in Georgia."

"'Shaw, I wouldn't care a tinker's cus," said Sam, "if I only jest hadn't a killed Blaze. That's what sets me back, monstrous."

"That was indeed an unlucky mistake. I should think a few such exploits as that would cure you of your fire-hunting propensity. But I expect you never had such luck, before to-night."

"No, not 'zactly—tho' I've had some monstrous bad luck in my time, too. I reckon you never hearn about the time I got among the panters."

"No—how was that?"

"Why, it was 'bout this time last fall, I and Dudley went out and 'camped on Sperit Creek. Well, he tuck his pan and went out one way, and I went another. I went shinin' along jest like you seed me to-night, till I got a good bit from the camp, and bimeby, shore enough, I sees eyes not more'n forty yards off. I fotched old Betsey up to my face and cut loose, and the deer drapped right in his tracks, but somehow in my hurryment I drapt my pan, jest like I did to-night when I heard old Blaze squeel. While I was tryin' to kindle up a light, what should I see but more eyes shinin' way down in the holler. I drapt the fire and loaded up old Betsey as quick as I could, to be ready for the varmint, whatever it was. Well, the eyes kep comin' closer and closer, and gettin' bigger and brighter, and the fust thing I know'd ther was a whole grist of 'em all follerin' right after the fust ones, and dodgin' up and down in the dark like they was so many dancin' devils. Well, I begun to feel sort o' jubous of 'em, so I raised old Betsey and pulled at the nearest eyes, but she snapped—I primed her agin, and she flashed—and when I flashed, sich another squallin' and yellin' you never did hear, and up the trees they went all round me.

Thinks I them must be somethin' unnatural, bein' as my gun wouldn't shoot at 'em—so I jest drapt old Betsey, and put out for the camp as hard as I could split. Well, we went back the next mornin', and what do you think them infernal critters had done?—eat the deer up slick and clean, all but the bones and horns, and a little ways off lay old Betsey, with four fingers of buck-shot and bullets, but not a bit of powder in her. Then I know'd they was panters."

"Why, they might have eaten you too."

"That's a fact. Dudley said he wondered they didn't take hold of me."

The drizzling shower which had already nearly wet us to the skin, now turned to a drenching storm, which continued for more than an hour without intermission. When the storm abated, we discovered the dawn approaching, and, shortly after, were enabled to ascertain our whereabouts. We were not more than five hundred yards from the clearing, and probably had not been, during the night, at a greater distance than a mile from the house which we had left in the evening.

As we stepped from the wood into the open road, I contemplated, for a moment, the ludicrous ap-

pearance of my unfortunate companion. Poor Sam!—daylight, and the prospect of home, brought no joy to him—and as he stood before me, with the saddle and bridle of the deceased Blaze girded about his neck, his musket in one hand, and pan in the other, drenched with rain, his clothes torn, and a countenance that told of the painful conflict within, I could not but regard him as an object of sympathy rather than ridicule.

"Well," said he, with a heavy sigh, and without looking me in the face, "good mornin', Major."

"Good morning," I replied, touched with sympathy for his misfortune, and reproaching myself for the mirth I had enjoyed at his expense—"Good morning, Mr. Sikes. I am very sorry for your loss, and hope you will have better luck in future."

"Oh, Major," said he, "it ain't the vally of the mule that I minds so much—though old Blaze was a monstrous handy cretur on the place. But thar's my wife—what'll she say when she sees me comin' home in this here fix? Howsomedever, what can't be cured must be indured, as the feller said when the monkey bit him."

"That's the true philosophy," I remarked, seeing that he endeavoured to take courage from the train of reasoning into which he had fallen; "and Mrs. Sikes should bear in mind that accidents *will* happen, and be thankful that it's no worse."

"To be sure she ought," replied Sam, "but that ain't the way with her—she don't believe in accidents, nohow; and then she's so howdacious unreasonable when she's raised. But, she better not," he continued, with a stern look as he spoke—"she better not come a cavortin' 'bout me with any of her rantankerous carryin's on this mornin', for I ain't in no humour nohow!" and he made a threatening gesture with his head, as much as to say he'd make the fur fly if she did.

We parted at the gate, Sam for his home, and I for my bed; he sorely convinced that a "bad beginning" does not *always* "make a good ending," and I fully resolved that it should be my first and last FIRE-HUNT.

XX.

A PAIR OF SLIPPERS; OR, FALLING WEATHER.

WHENEVER we look upon the crowded thoroughfare, or regard the large assembly, we are compelled to admit that the infinite variety of form in the human race contributes largely to the picturesque. The eye travels over the diversity of shape and size without fatigue, and renews its strength by turning from one figure to another, when, at each remove, it is sure to find a difference. Satiated with gazing at rotundity, it is refreshed by a glance at lathiness: and, tired with stooping to the lowly, it can mount like a bird to the aspiring head which tops a maypole.

But, while the potency of these pictorial beauties is admitted, it must be conceded that the variations from the true standard, although good for the eye-sight, are productive of much inconvenience; and that, to consider the subject like a Benthamite, utility and the general advantage would be promoted if the total amount of flesh, blood, bone, and muscle were more equally distributed. As affairs are at present arranged, it is almost impossible to find a "ready-made coat" that will answer one's purpose, and a man may stroll through half the shops in town without being able to purchase a pair of boots which he can wear with any degree of comfort. In hanging a lamp, every shop-keeper, who "lights up," knows that it is a very troublesome matter so to swing it, that, while the short can see the commodities, the tall will not demolish the glass. If an abbreviated "turnippy" man, in the goodness of his heart and *in articulo mortis*, bequeaths his wardrobe to a long and gaunt friend, of what service is the posthumous present? It is available merely as new clothing for the juveniles, or as something toward another kitchen carpet. Many a martial spirit is obliged to content himself with civic employment, although a mere bottle of fire and wrath,

because heroism is enlisted by inches, and not by degree.

If under "five foot six," Cæsar himself could find no favour in the eye of the recruiting-sergeant, and Alexander the Great would be allowed to bestride no Bucephalus in a dragoon regiment of modern times. Thus, both they who get too much, and they who get too little, in Dame Nature's apportionment bill, as well as those who, though abundantly endowed, are not well made up, have divers reasons for grumbling, and for wishing that a more perfect uniformity prevailed.

Some of the troubles which arise from giving a man more than his share in altitude, find illustration in the subjoined narrative:

Linkum Langcale is a subject *in extenso*. He is, to use the words of the poet, suggested by his name,

"..... *A bout*
Of linked sweetness long drawn out:"

and, in speaking of him, it is not easy to be brief. Linkum is entirely too long for his own comfort—something short—if the word *short* may be used in this connection—something short of the height of the Titans of old, who pelted Saturn with brickbats;

but how much, has never yet been ascertained, none of his acquaintances being sufficiently acquainted with trigonometry to determine the fact. He is one of those men who, like the gentle Marcia, "tower above their sex," and must always be called down to their dinner, as no information can be imparted to them unless it be hallooed up, and in conversing with whom, it is always necessary to begin by hailing the maintop.

There is not, however, more material in Linkum than enough for a man of ordinary length. The fault is in his not being properly made up. He is abominably wire-drawn—stretched out, as Shakspeare says, almost to the crack of doom. It is clear that there has been an attempt to make too much of him, but the frame of the idea has not been well filled out. He is the streak of a Colossus, and he resembles the willow wand at which Locksley shot his gray goose shaft in the lists of Ashby de la Zouche. The consequence is, that Linkum is a crank vessel. If he wore a feather in his cap, he would be capsized at every corner; and as it is, he finds it very difficult to get along on a windy day, without a paving stone in each coat-pocket to preserve the balance of power. He is, however, of a

convivial nature, and will not refuse his glass, notwithstanding the aptitude of alcohol to ascend into the brain, and so to encumber it as to render a perpendicular position troublesome to men shorter than himself. When in this condition, his troubles are numberless, and among other matters, he finds it very difficult to get a clear fall, there being in compact cities very little room to spare for the accommodation of long men tumbling down in the world.

One evening Linkum walked forth to a convivial meeting, and supped with a set of jolly companions. Late at night a rain came on, which froze as it fell, and soon made the city one universal slide, sufficiently "glip" for all purposes, without the aid of saw-dust. Of Linkum's sayings and doings at the social board, no record is preserved; but it is inferred that his amusements were not of a nature to qualify him for the safe performance of a journey so slippery as that which it was necessary to undertake to reach home. No lamps were lighted, they who were abroad being under the necessity of supposing the moonshine, and of seeing their way as they walked, or of gathering themselves up, when they fell, by the lantern of imagination.

"Good night, fellers," said Linkum, at the top of the steps, as the door closed after him.

He pulled his hat over his eyes determinedly, buttoned his coat with resolution, and sucked at his cigar with that iron energy peculiar to men about to set forth on their way home on a cold, stormy night. The fire of the cigar reflected from his nose was the only illumination to be seen; and Linkum, putting his hands deep into his pockets, kept his position on the first step of the six which were between him and the pavement.

"I've no doubt," said he, as he puffed forth volumes of smoke, and seemed to cogitate deeply—"I've not the slightest doubt that this is as beautiful a night as ever was; only it's so dark you can't see the pattern of it. One night is pretty much like another night in the dark; but it's a great advantage to a good-looking evening, if the lamps are lit, so you can twig the stars and the moonshine. The fact is, that in this 'ere city, we do grow the blackest moons, and the hardest moons to find, I ever did see. Sometimes I'm most disposed to send the bellman after 'em—or get a full-blooded pinter to pint 'em out, while I hold a candle to see

which way he pints. It wouldn't be a bad notion on sich occasions to ask the man in the steeple to ring which way the moon is. Lamps is lamps, and moons is moons, in a business pint of view, but practically they ain't much if the wicks ain't a-fire. When the luminaries are, as I may say, in the raw, it's bad for me. I can't see the ground as perforately as little fellers, and every dark night I'm sure to get a hyst—either a forrerd hyst, or a backerd hyst, or some sort of a hyst—but more backerds than forrerds, 'specially in winter. One of the most unfeeling tricks I know of, is the way some folks have got of laughing out, yaw-haw! when they see a gentleman ketching a riggler hyst —a long gentleman, for instance, with his legs in the air, and his noddle splat down upon the cold bricks. A hyst of itself is bad enough, without being sniggered at: first, your sconce gets a crack; then, you see all sorts of stars, and have free admission to the fireworks; then, you scramble up, feeling as if you had no head on your shoulders, and as if it wasn't you, but some confounded disagreeable feller in your clothes; yet the jacksnipes all grin, as if the misfortunes of human nature was only a poppet-show. I wouldn't mind it, if you

could get up and look as if you didn't care. But a man can't rise, after a royal hyst, without letting on he feels flat. In such cases, however, sympathy is all gammon; and as for sensibility of a winter's day, people keep it all for their own noses, and can't be coaxed to retail it by the small."

Linkum paused in his prophetic dissertation upon "hysts"—the popular pronunciation, in these parts, of the word *hoist*, which is used—*quasi lucus a non lucendo*—to convey the idea of the most complete tumble which man can experience. A fall, for instance, is indeterminate. It may be an easy slip down—a gentle visitation of mother earth; but a hyst is a rapid, forcible performance, which may be done, as Linkum observes, either backward or forward, but of necessity with such violence as to knock the breath out of the body, or it is unworthy of the noble appellation of hyst. It is an apt, but figurative mode of expression, and it is often carried still further; for people sometimes say, "lower him up, and hyst him down."

Our hero held on firmly to the railing, and peered keenly into the darkness, without discovering any object on which his vision could rest. The

gloom was substantial. It required sharper eyes than his to bore a hole in it. The wind was up, and the storm continued to coat the steps and pavements with a sheet of ice.

"It's raining friz potatoes," observed Linkum; "I feel 'em, though I can't see 'em, bumping the end of my nose; so I must hurry home as fast as I can."

Heedless and hapless youth! He made a vain attempt to descend, but, slipping, he came in a sitting posture upon the top step, and, in that attitude, flew down like lightning—bump! bump! bump! The impetus he had acquired prevented him from stopping on the sidewalk, notwithstanding his convulsive efforts to clutch the icy bricks, and he *skuted* into the gutter, whizzing over the curbstone, and splashing into the water, like a young Niagara.

A deep silence ensued, broken solely by the pattering of the rain and the howling of the wind. Linkum was an exhausted receiver; the hyst was perfect, the breath being completely knocked out of him.

"Laws-a-massy!" at length he panted, "ketching" breath at intervals, and twisting about as if

in pain ; "my eyes! sich a hyst! Sich a quantity of hysts all in one! The life's almost bumped out of me, and I'm jammed up so tight, I don't believe I'm so tall by six inches as I was before. I'm druv up and clinched, and I'll have to get tucks in my trousers."

Linkum sat still, ruminating on the curtailment of his fair proportions, and made no effort to rise. The door soon opened again, and Mr. Broad Brevis came forth, at which a low, suppressed chuckle was uttered by Linkum, as he looked over his shoulder, anticipating "a quantity of hysts all in one" for the new-comer, whose figure, however—short and stout—was much better calculated for the operation than Linkum's. But Brevis seemed to suspect that the sliding was good, and the skating magnificent.

"No, you don't!" quoth he, as he tried the step with one foot, and recovered himself; "I haven't seen the Alleghany Portage and inclined planes for nothing. It takes me to diminish the friction, and save the wear and tear."

So saying, he quietly tucked up his coat-tails, and sitting down upon the mat, which he grasped with both hands, gave himself a gentle impulse, crying "All aboard!" and slid slowly but majesti-

cally down. As he came to the plain sailing across the pavement, he twanged forth "Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra-tra-a-a!" in excellent imitation of the post-horn, and brought up against Linkum. "Clear the course for the express mail, or I'll report you to the department!" roared Brevis, trumpeting the "alarum," so well known to all who have seen a tragedy—"Tra-tretra-ta-ra-tra-a-a!"

"That's queer fun, anyhow," said a careful wayfarer, turning the corner, with lantern in hand, and sock on foot, who, after a short parley, was induced to set the gentlemen on their pins. First planting Brevis against the pump, who sang, "Let me lean on thee," from the Sonnambula, in prime style, he undertook to lift up Linkum.

"Well," observed the stranger, "this is a chap without no end to him—he'd be pretty long a drowning anyhow. If there was many more like him in the gutters, it would be better to get a windlass, and wind 'em up. I never seed a man with so much slack. The corporation ought to buy him, starch him up stiff, cut a hole for a clock in his hat, and use him for a steeple; only Downing wouldn't like to trust himself on the top of such a ricketty concern. Neighbour, shall I fetch the Humane Society's apparatus?"

"No—I ain't drownded, only bumped severe. The curbstones have touched my feelings. I'm all over like a map—red, blue, and green."

"Now," said their friendly assistant, grinning at the joke, and at the recompense he had received for the job, "now, you two hook on to one another like Siameses, and mosey. You've only got to tumble one a top of t'other, and it won't hurt. Tortle off—it's slick going—'specially if you're going down. .Push ahead!" continued he, as he hitched them together; and away they went, *a pair of slippers*, arm in arm. Many were their tumbles and many their mischances before they reached their selected resting-place.

"I can't stand this," said Linkum to his companion, as they were slipping and falling; "but it's mostly owing to my being so tall. I wish I was razee'd, and then it wouldn't happen. The awning posts almost knock the head off me; I'm always tumbling over wheelbarrows, dogs, and children, because, if I look down, I'm certain to knock my noddle against something above. It's a complete nuisance to be so tall. Beds are too short; if you go to a tea-fight, the people are always tumbling over your trotters, and breaking their noses, which is what young ladies ain't partial to; and if you

tipple too much toddy of a slippery night—about as easy a thing to do as you'd wish to try—you're sure to get a hyst a square long—just such a one as I've had. If I'd thought of it, I could have said the multiplication-table while I was going the figure. Stumpy chaps, such as you, ain't got no troubles in this world."

"That's all you know about it," puffed Brevis, as Linkum alternately jerked him from his feet, and then caused him to slide in the opposite direction, with his heels ploughing the ice, like a shaft-horse holding back: "phew! That's all you know about it—stumpies have troubles."

"I can't borrow coats," added Linkum, soliloquizing, "because I don't like cuffs at the elbows. I can't borrow pants, because it isn't the fashion to wear knee-breeches, and all my stockings are socks. I can't hide when anybody owes me a lambasting. You can see me a mile. When I sit by the fire, I can't get near enough to warm my body, without burning my knees; and in a stage-coach, there's no room between the benches, and the way you get the cramp—don't mention it."

"I don't know nothing about all these things; but to imagine I was a tall chap—"

"Don't try; you'll hurt yourself, for it's a

great stretch of imagination for a little feller to do that."

After which amicable colloquy, nothing more was heard of them, except that, before retiring to rest, they chuckled over the idea that the coming spring would sweat the ice to death for the annoyance it had caused them. But ever while they live, will they remember "the night of hysts."

XXI.

A SWIM FOR A DEER.

"YES, Capting, the bar war *lower,* I tell *you*—why, bless your soul, honey, they war not only powerful thick, but some on 'em war as big as common-sized horses, I *do* reckon; cause why, nobody ever had hunted 'em, you see. In the winter time the overflow, and in the summer time the lakes and snakes, bayous and alligators, musketoes and gallinippers, buffalo-gnats and sand-flies, with a small sprinkle of the agur and a *perfect cord* of congestive, prevented the Ingins from gwine through the country! Oh no; the red skins would rather hunt the fat turkey and deer in the Azoo hills and

pine lands t'other side of the Pearl river, to killin' fat bar on the Creek or Sunflower."

"Well, Jim, I think they were right; you must then have been among the first hunters in the country."

"Yes, I *do* reckon when I first went into that country, from the Azoo Hills to the Mississippi, there never had been but *mighty few* hunters. Why thar ar places thar now whar the deer ar tame as sheep, and whar the bar don't care for *nobody!* Fact! ask Chunkey!"

"That is very remarkable; what is the cause?"

"'Cause they've never been hunted; no, Sir: never hearn the crack of a rifle nor the yelp of a dog; why thar ar more nor a hundred lakes and brakes in them diggins, that hain't never been pressed by no mortal 'ceptin' varmints. You know more nor half the country is overflowed in the winter, and t'other half, which is a darned sight the biggest, is covered with cane, palmetto and other fixins;—why it stands to reason, and in course no man ever *had* hunted 'em.—Why, Sir, when I first went to the Creek—"

"Let the Creek run, Jim; tell us about the bear!"

"Well, Sir, the bar war *very* promiscuous in-

deed, and some of the old hees war mighty mellifluous, I tell *you*. I had no sens about bar *then*, but thar warn't no cabin or camp in the whole settlement, and in course I soon larnt thar natur by livin' 'mongst 'em. A bar, Capting, an old *he* bar, 'ain't no candidate or other good-natured greenhorn to stand gougin' and treatin'. Oh no, *he* ain't, but he's as ramstugenous an animal as a log-cabin loafer in the dog days, jist about, and if a stranger fools with him he'll get sarved out in no time.

"Well, let's licker. A bar is a *consaity* animal, but as far as his sens do go he's about as smart as any other animal; arter that, the balance is clear fat and fool. I have lived 'mongst 'em, and know ther natur. I have killed as many as seven in a day, and *smartly* to the rise of sixty in a season. Arter I'd been on the Creek about two months, *up* comes the Governor *and* Chunkey; the Governor 'tended like he wanted to see how I come on with the clearin'; but, Sir, he were arter a spree, and I knoe'd it, or *why* did he bring Chunkey? Everything looked *mighty* well; the negers looked fat and slick as old Belcher in catfish season. I'd done cut more nor two hundred acres of cane, and had the rails on the ground. I'd done—"

"Come, Jim, keep the track!"

"Well, Capting, they war mighty savagerous arter likker; they'd been fightin' the stranger* mightly comin' up, and war perfectly wolfish arter some har of the dog, and I hadn't a drop; so I started two negers, with mules and jugs, to the Pint (Princeton, Washington County), and the ox-team arter a barrel. Well, Sir, the day arter, the jugs come, and we *darted* on 'em" (giving a sigh), "but lord, what war two jugs in *sich* a crowd? They jist kept Chunkey from dyin', as he was so dry he had the rattles; next day the barrel come, and then we *krack*-ovienned up to it in airnest. *You* know what kind of man Chunkey is when he gits started—if he commences talkin', singin', or whistlin', no matter which, you'd jist as well try and stop the Mississippi as him. Why I've knoed him to whistle three days and three nights on a stretch—the Governor coulden't eat nor drink for Chunkey's whistlin', and at last he gits mad, and that's the last thing he does with anybody what *he* likes, and, says he to Chunkey—

"'Chunkey, you have kept me awake two nights

* A barrel of whiskey is called a "stranger," from the fact that it is brought from a distance, there being none made in the country.

a-whistlin', and you must stop it to-night, or *you* or *me* must quit the plantation.'

"Chunkey said: 'Governor, I don't want to put you to no trouble, but I *can't* stop in the middle of a chune, and as you have known the plantation longer than me, I expect you can leave it with lest trouble.'

"The Governor jist roar'd, and gin Chunkey a new gun and—"

"Stop, Jim, you have forgot the bear."

"Well, whar was I, Capting?—oh, I remember now! Well, when the barrel come we *did* lumber; Chunkey he soon commenced singin'. We went on that way nigh a week, and then cooled off. One mornin', I and Chunkey had gone down to the creek to git a bait of water, and I knoed the bar would be thar, as it war waterin' time with them."

"Why, Jim, have they a particular time to water?"

"In course they has; they come to water at a certain place, and jist as reglar as a parson to his eatin'; every bar has his waterin' place, and he comes and goes in the same path and in *the same foot-tracks* always, until he moves his settlement: and jist you break a cane, or limb, or move a chunk

or stick near his trail, and see how quick he'll move his cabin! Oh yes, a bar is mighty particlar about sich things—that's his *sens*—that's his *trap* to find out if you are in his settlement. Why, Capting, I have watched 'em—"

"Jim, you have left yourself and Chunkey on the bank of the creek, 'a-waterin'.' Are you going to stay there?"

"Well, we set down on the bank and took our stand opposite the *biggest kind* of sign, and sure enough, presently *down* he come; a bar don't lap water like a dog; no, they sucks it like a hog. You jist ought to see him rais his nose and smell the wind. Well, he seed us, and with that he *ris!* He war a whopper, I *tell you!* He looked like a big burn, and he throw'd them arms about awful, honey. It war about one hundred and twenty yards to him, but I knoed he were *my* meat without an accident, so I let drive, and he took the creek—then out he went, and scampered up the bank *mighty quick*, and then sich a ratlin' among cane, sich a growlin' and snortin', sich a breakin' of saplins and vines, I reckon you never *did* hear; I knoed, in course, I had him. I throwed a log in and paddled across—found his trail, and lots of har and fat, but no blood!"

"That was very strange, Jim; how did you account for that?"

"Why he were too fat to bleed! Oh, you think I am foolin' you, but you ask Chunkey. It is frequently the case. I follered his trail about a quarter and a half a quarter, and *thar* he lay; so I jist hollered to Chunkey to git two negers and a yoke of steers to take him to the house. How much do you reckon he weighed?"

"I have no idea, Jim."

"Now, Sir, he weighed, without head, skin, or entrails, four hundred and ninety-three pounds, and his head sixty pounds! You don't believe me! Well, just ask Chunkey if I haint killed 'em smartly over seven hundred pounds! Killin' him sorter got my blood up, and I determined to have another. Chunkey had been jerkin' it to the licker gourd mighty smart, and was jest right."

"'Chunkey,' says I, 'let's gin it to another!'

"'Good as ——,' says Chunkey. 'Who cars for expenses? a hundred dollar bill ain't no more in my pocket nor a cord of wood!'

"With that we started down to the Bend; we haddent been thar long when *in* comes an old buck; he was a smasher, and one horn were broke off. I telled Chunkey now's his

time, as I skorn'd to toch him arter killin' a bar. Chunkey lathered away, and *ca chunk!* he went into the creek; he then gin him a turn with t'other barrel; the buck wabbled about a time or two and sunk, jist at the head of the little raft at the lower end of the clearin'. I know'd he'd lodged agin the drift, and determined to have him, and if you'll believe me, I'd been workin' at the gourd since I'd killed the bar. I pulled off my coat and jest throwed myself in; I swimd out to the place and *div*—you know the current are might rapid thar. Well, I found him, yes, —— if I diddent. But, Moses! warn't I in a tight place *that* time? Well, I reckon I were. I'd been willin' to fite the biggest *he* on the creek, and gin him the first bite, to have been out!"

"Why, Jim, what was the matter?"

"Arter I'd got in, I couldent get out—*that* was the matter! You see the drift were a homogification of old cyprus logs, vines, and drift-wood of evry description, for nigh three hundred yards long, and the creek runs under thar like it was arter somebody; the trees and vines, and prognostics of all sorts, ar sorter nit together like a sock, and you couldent begin to get through 'em. Well, Capting,

I thought my time had come, and I knowed it war for killin' that cub what I telled you about. And, sir, it would have come if it haddent been for the sorritude I felt arterwards. You see, the young cub was standin' in the corner of the fence eatin' roastin' ears, and I was goin' to the ——"

"But, Jim, you have told that once, and I don't want to hear it again."

"Well, I tried to rise, but I'd as well tried to rise down'ard. I then tried to swim up 'bove the raft, but I found from the way the logs and vines ware tearin' the extras off me, that I were goin' further under, and I was gettin' out of wind very fast. I knowed thar was but one chance, and that was *to go clean through!* So I busted loose and set my paddles to goin' mightily; presently my head bumped agin the drift! I div agin, and kept my paddles a lumberin'! Chunk! my head went agin a log, and then I knowed the thing were *irrefrangably out*—but I div agin, still workin' on my oars smartly, until I hung agin!

"'Good bye, Chunkey!—farewell, Governor,' says I.

"But, Capting, I were all the time tryin' to do

something. Things had begun to look speckled, green, and then *omniferous;* but findin' I were not gone yet, by the way I were kickin' and pawin', and knowin' I were goin' *somewhere,* and expectin' to the devil, there ain't *no* tellin' how long or powerful I *did* work! The fust thing I recollect arter that, was gittin' a mouthful of wind! *Fact!* I'd done, gone clean through, and were hangin' on to a tree below the raft! But, Sir, I were *mighty* weak, and couldent tell a stump from an old he, and 'spected smartly for some time that I were in the yother world, and commenced an excuse for comin' so onexpectedly! However, presently I got sorter right, and when I found I were safe, I reckon you never *did* see a man feel so *unanimous* in your life, and I made the water fly for joy."

"Well, Jim, what had become of Chunkey? He did not leave you?"

"Yes, —— if he diddent? He'd commenced gittin' dry afore he shot the deer; and when Chunkey wants a drink, if his daddy was drounin', Chunkey would go to the licker gourd afore he'd go to his daddy. I went to the house, and *thar* he was settin' at the table, jist a rattlin' his teeth agin the bar's ribs; he held a tin cup in one hand 'bout

half full of licker; his head were sorter throwd back; he was breathin' sorter hard, his eye set on the Governor, humpin' himself on politics.

"'Down with the specie kurrency,' says Chunkey; 'it ain't no account, and I'm agin it. When we had good times, I drank five-dollar-a-gallon brandy, and had pockets full of money.'

"'But,' says the Governor, 'you bought the brandy on a credit, and never paid for it!'

"'What's the difference?' asks Chunkey. 'Them what I bought it from never paid for it; they bought it on a credit from them fureigners, and never paid for it, and them fureigners, you say, are a pack of scoundrels, and I go in for ruinin' 'em, so far as good licker is concarned.'

"'You are drunk,' says the Governor, and then——but, Capting, you look sleepy; let's licker, and go to bed."

"No, I am not sleepy, Jim."

"Well, then, I'll tell you how I sarved Chunkey for leavin' me under the raft. Moses! diddent I pay him back! Did I ever tell you 'bout takin' Chunkey out on Sky Lake, makin' him drunk, takin' his gun and knife away from him, and a puttin' him to sleep in a panter's nest?"

"No, you never did; but was you not apprehensive they would kill him?"

"Kill him! No! If they'd commenced bitin' Chunkey, they'd have been looed, as that's a game Chunkey *invented!* But here he comes; and if you mention it afore him, it puts the dander in him. Let's licker."

XXII.

DILLY JONES; OR, THE PROGRESS OF IMPROVEMENT.*

One of the most difficult things in the world is to run before the wind; and, by judiciously observing the changes of the weather, to avoid being thrown out. Fashion is so unsteady, and improvements are so rapid, that the man whose vocation yields him an abundant harvest now, may, in a few years, if he has not a keen eye, and a plastic versatility, find that his skill and his business are both useless. Many were the poor barbers shipwrecked by the tax upon hair-powder, and numerous

* By J. C. Neal.

were the leather breeches' makers who were destroyed by the triumph of woollens. Their skill was doubtless very great, but it would not avail in a contest against the usages of the world; and unless they had the capacity to strike out a new course, they all shared the fate of their commodities, and retired to the dark cellars of popular estimation. Every day shows us the same principle of change at work, and no one has more reason to reflect and mourn about it than one Dilly Jones of this city. Dilly is not, perhaps, precisely the person who would be chronicled by the memoir writers of the time, or have a monument erected to him if he were no more; but Dilly is a man of a useful though humble vocation, and no one can saw hickory with more classic elegance, or sit upon the curbstone and take his dinner with more picturesque effect.

Yet, as has been hinted above, Dilly has his sorrows, particularly at night, after a hard day's work, when his animal spirits have been exhausted by reducing gum logs to the proper measure. In the morning he is full of life and energy, feeling as if he could saw a cord of Shot-towers, and snap the pillars of the Bank across his knee like pipe-stems. In the full flush of confidence at that time of day,

reflection batters against him in vain; but as the night draws on, Dilly feels exhausted and spiritless. His enthusiasm seems to disappear with the sun, and neither the moon nor the stars can cause high tide in the river of his mind. The current of his good spirits shrinks in its channel, leaving the gay and gorgeous barques of hope and confidence drearily ashore on the muddy flats; and his heart fails him as if it were useless longer to struggle against adversity.

It was in this mood that he was once seen travelling homeward, with his horse and saw fixed scientifically upon his shoulders. He meandered in his path in the way peculiar to men of his vocation, and travelled with that curvilinear elegance which at once indicates that he who practises it is of the wood-sawing profession, and illustrates the lopsided consequences of giving one leg more to do than the other. But Dilly was too melancholy on this occasion to feel proud of his professional air, and perhaps, had he thought of it, would have reproved the leg which performed the "sweep of sixty," for indulging in such graces, and thereby embarrassing its more humble brother, which, knowing that a right line is the shortest distance between two

places, laboured to go straight to its destination. Dilly, however, had no such stuff in his thoughts. His mind was reasoning from the past to the future, and was mournfully meditating upon the difficulties of keeping up with the changes of the times, which roll onward like a Juggernaut, and crush all who are not swift enough to maintain themselves in the lead. He wondered why fashions and customs should so continually change, and repined that he could not put a spoke in their wheel, that the trade of one's early days might likewise be the trade of one's latter years. So complete was his abstraction that he unconsciously uttered his thoughts aloud:

"Sawing wood's going all to smash," said he, "and that's where everything goes what I speculates in. This here coal is doing us up. Ever since these black stones was brought to town, the wood-sawyers and pilers, and them soap-fat and hickory-ashes men, has been going down; and, for my part, I can't say as how I see what's to be the end of all their new-fangled contraptions. But it's always so; I'm always crawling out of the little end of the horn. I began life in a comfortable sort of a way; selling oysters out of a wheelbarrow, all clear grit, and didn't owe nobody nothing. Oysters went

down slick enough for a while, but at last cellars was invented, and darn the oyster, no matter how nice it was pickled, could poor Dill sell; so I had to eat up capital and profits myself. Then the 'pepree pot smoking' was sot up, and went ahead pretty considerable for a time; but a parcel of fellers come into it, said my cats wasn't as good as their'n, when I know'd they was as fresh as any cats in the market; and pepree pot was no go. Bean soup was just as bad; people said kittens wasn't good done that way, and the more I hollered, the more the customers wouldn't come, and them what did, wanted tick. Along with the boys and their pewter fips, them what got trust and didn't pay, and the abusing of my goods, I was soon fotch'd up in the victualling line—and I busted for the benefit of my creditors. But genius riz. I made a raise of a horse and saw, after being a wood-piler's 'prentice for a while, and working till I was free, and now here comes the coal to knock this business in the head. My people's decent people, and I can't disgrace 'em by turning Charcoal Jemmy, or smashing the black stones with a pickaxe. They wouldn't let me into no society at all if I did."

The idea of being excluded from the upper circles

of the society in which he had been in the habit of moving, fell heavily upon the heart of poor Dilly Jones. He imagined the curled lips and scornful glances of the aristocratic fair, who now listened with gratification to his compliments and to his soft nonsense; he saw himself passed unrecognised in the street—absolutely cut by his present familiar friends, and the thought of losing caste almost crushed his already dejected spirit.

The workings of his imagination, combined with the fatigue of his limbs, caused such exhaustion, that, dislodging his horse from his shoulder, he converted it into a camp-stool, seated himself under the lee of a shop window, and, after slinging his saw petulantly at a dog, gazed with vacant eyes upon the people who occasionally passed, and glanced at him with curiosity.

"Hey, Mister!" said a shop-boy, at last, "I want to get shut of you, 'cause we're goin' to shet up. You're right in the way, and if you don't boom along, why Ben and me will have to play hysence, clearance, puddin's out with you afore you've time to chalk your knuckles—won't we, Ben?"

"We'll plump him off of baste before he can say

fliance, or get a sneak. We're knuckle dabsters, both on us. You'd better emigrate—the old man's coming, and if he finds you here, he'll play the mischief with you, before you can sing out, 'I'm up if you knock it and ketch.' "

So saying, the two lads placed themselves one on each side of Dilly, and began swinging their arms with an expression that hinted very plainly at a forcible ejectment. Dilly, however, who had forgotten all that he ever knew of the phrases so familiar to those who scientifically understand the profound game of marbles, wore the puzzled air of one who labours to comprehend what is said to him. But the meaning became so apparent as not to be mistaken, when Ben gave a sudden pull at the horse, which almost dismounted the rider.

"Don't be so unfeelin'," ejaculated Dilly, as he clutched the cross-bars of his seat; "don't be unfeelin', for a man in grief is like a wood-piler in a cellar—mind how you chuck, or you'll crack his calabash."

"Take care of your calabash, then," was the grinning response; "you must skeete, even if you have to cut high-dutchers with your irons loose, and that's no fun."

"High-dutch yourself, if you know how; only go 'way from me, 'cause I ain't got no time."

"Well," said the boys, "haven't we caught you on our payment?—what do you mean by crying here—what do you foller when you're at home?"

"I works in wood; that's what I foller."

"You're a carpenter, I s'pose," said Ben, winking at Tom.

"No, not exactly; but I saws wood better nor any half-dozen loafs about the drawbridge. If it wasn't for grief, I'd give both of you six, and beat you, too, the best day you ever saw, goin' the rale gum and hickory—for I don't believe you're gentlemen's sons; nothin' but poor trash—half-and-half—want to be and can't, or you wouldn't keep a troubling of me."

"Gauley, Ben, if he isn't a wharf-rat! If you don't trot, as I've told you a'ready, boss will be down upon you, and fetch you up like a catty on a cork-line—jerk!"

"That's enough," replied Dilly; "there's more places nor one in the world—at least there is yet; new fashions haven't shut up the streets yet, and obligated people to hire hackney balloons if they want to go a-walkin', or omnibus boardin'-houses

when they want a fip's worth of dinner, or a levy's-worth of sleep. Natural legs is got some chance for a while, anyhow, and a man can get along if he ain't got clock-vurks to make him go.

"I hope, by'm'by," added Dill, scornfully, as he marched away from the chuckling lads, "that there won't be no boys to plague people. I'd vote for that new fashion myself. Boys is luisances, accordin' to me."

He continued to soliloquize as he went, and his last observations were as follows:

"I wonder if they wouldn't list me for a Charley? Hollering oysters and bean-soup has guv' me a splendid woice; and instead of skeering 'em away, if the thieves were to hear me singing out, my style of doing it would almost coax 'em to come and be took up. They'd feel like a bird when a snake is after it, and would walk up, and poke their coat-collars right into my fist. Then, after a while, I'd perhaps be promoted to the fancy business of pig-ketching, which, though it is werry light and werry elegant, requires genus. Tisn't every man that can come the scientifics in that line, and has studied the nature of a pig, so as to beat him at canœuvering, and make him surrender 'cause he

sees it ain't no use of doing nothing. It wants larning to conwince them critters, and it's only to be done by heading 'em up handsome, hopping which ever way they hop, and tripping 'em up genteel by shaking hands with their off-hind leg. I'd scorn to pull their tails out by the roots, or to hurt their feelin's by dragging 'em about by the ears.

"But what's the use? If I was listed, they'd soon find out to holler the hour and to ketch the thieves by steam; yes, and they'd take 'em to court on a railroad, and try 'em with biling water. They'll soon have black locomotives for watchmen and constables, and big bilers for judges and mayors. Pigs will be ketched by steam, and will be biled fit to eat before they are done squealing. By and by, folks won't be of no use at all. There won't be no people in the world but tea-kettles; no mouths, but safety-valves; and no talking, but blowing off steam. If I had a little biler inside of me, I'd turn omnibus, and week-days I'd run from Kensington to the Navy Yard, and Sundays I'd run to Fairmount."

XXIII.

LANTY OLIPHANT IN COURT.

Lawyers allege that there are four classes of witnesses: those who prove too much, those who prove too little, those of a totally negative character, and those of no character at all, who will prove anything. We have a case in point.

Far, very far away from the tall Blue Mountains, at a little place called Lodom, there were upon a time three neighbours called in, as arbitrators, to settle a point relative to some stolen chickens, in dispute between one Lot Corson, and a "hard case" called Emanuel Allen, better known thereabouts as King of the Marsh.

"Mister Constable," said one of the semi-judicials, "now call the principal witness."

"Lanty Oliphant! Lanty Oliph-ant!" bawled Dogberry; "Mosey in, and be sworn!"

In obedience to this summons, little Lanty, whose bottle had usurped the place in his affections commonly assigned to soap and water, waddled up, and was qualified, deprecating, by a look, the necessity of such a useless ceremony among gentlemen.

"Mister Oliphant, you are now swore. Do you know the value of an oath?" asked the senior of the board.

"Doesn't I?" rejoined Lanty, with a wink at a bystander. "Four bushel of weight wheat, the old score wiped off, and licker for the hul day throw'd in."

This matter-of-fact answer met a severe frown from the man with the red ribbon round his hat.

"Well, Mister Oliphant," continued the senior, "tell all you know about this here case."

Lanty here testified:

"Feelin' a sort of outish t'other day, ses I to the old woman, ses I, 'I'll jist walk over to Lot's, and take a nipper or two this mornin',' ses I. 'It'll

take the wind off my stomach sorter,' ses I. Then the old woman's feathers riz, they did, like a porky-pine's bristles, and ses she:

"'Lanty,' says she, 'if you'd on'y airn more bread and meat, and drink less whisky, you wouldn't have wind on your stomach.'

"'Suse,' ses I, 'this is one of my resarved rights, and I goes agin home industry,' ses I, sort o' laughin' out o' the wrong side o' my mouth.

"'Resarved rights or desarved wrongs,' ses her, 'you'r always a drinkin' and talkin' politics when you orter be at work, and there's never nothin' to eat in the house.'

"Well, as I was a-goin' over to Lot's, jist fernent where the fence *was,* ses I to myself, ses I: 'If there isn't the old King's critters in my corn-field, so I'll jist go and tell him on't.' When I gets there, 'Good mornin', Lanty,' ses he.

"'Good mornin', old hoss,' ses I; and when I went in, there was a pot on the fire a-cookin', with a *great big speckled rooster* in it."

"Mister Oliphant!" here interposed one of the arbitrators, "remember that you are on oath. How do you know that the chicken in the pot was 'a big speckled rooster?'"

"'Kase I *seed the feathers at the woodpile!*" promptly responded Lanty, who then continued:

"Well, when I gits to Lot's, 'Good mornin', Lot, ses I.

"'Good mornin', Lanty,' ses he. 'You didn't see nothin' nowhere of nar' a big speckled rooster that didn't belong to nobody, did you?' ses he.

"'Didn't I?' ses I.

"'Come, Lanty,' ses he, 'let's take a nipper,' ses he;' and then I up and tells him all about it."

"Had Mr. Allen no chickens of his own?" asked the senior.

"Sartin'," rejoined Lanty; "but there warn't a rooster in the crowd. They was *all layin' hens!*"

"Well," inquired another of the referees, "how many of these hens had Mr. Allen?"

This question fairly "stump'd" Lanty for a moment, but he quickly answered:

"Why, with what was there, and what wasn't there, counting little and big, spring chickens and all, *there was forty odd, exactly*!"

No further questions were put to this witness.

XXIV.

OLD SINGLETIRE.*

THE MAN THAT WAS NOT ANNEXED.

A GOOD story is told of this bold frontiersman, who had made himself notorious, and given his character the *bend sinister,* by frequent depredations on both sides the boundary line between Texas and the United States. The old fellow had migrated thither from parts unknown, years since, knew every foot of country for fifty miles on either side in his vicinity, and had communication by runners with many "*birds of the same feather,*" then common in the region.

* By the late Robert Patterson.

The old fellow saw, with sorrow and regret, the rapid influx of population within the last ten years, and was compelled gradually to narrow his sphere of *usefulness;* for, said he:

"People's a gittin' too thick about me—tha and their varmints and critters is fillin' up the woods and spilin' the huntin'—and then tha ain't no chance for a fellar to *speculate* upon travellers as tha used to be when tha wan't anybody to watch a fellar. Why, tha is getten to be so *civylizated* that a fellar can't drink a barrel of double-rectified 'thout havin' 'em all abusin' him about it—and then ef he doas happen jist by accident to drap half an ounce of lead into a feller, why tha is all up in arms about it. Now t'other day, when I wanted to mark Joe Sliteses' ears like tha marks their hogs, 'case he called me a vill-*yan,* they wanted to *jewdicate* me afore the court. But, 'cuse 'em for a set of fools, they ain't a-gwoin' to fool 'Old Singletire,' ef he is a-gitten old, and ain't as quick on the trigger as he used to was.

"Dang their skins, I don't care ef tha *does* annexate Texas! I'll show 'em somethin'—tho' tha thinks tha is got me slick when tha git the two countries wedged up into one—but I'll fix 'em;

I'll quit, and go to Arkansaw, whar a decent white man kin live 'thout bein' pestered, and 'bused and *jewdicated!*"

"Old Single," as he was called, *for short,* had several years previous to the late discussion of the annexation question, with singular 'cuteness ascertained the precise line dividing the two territories, and built his cabin thereon in such a position, that, when lying down, *he slept, one half in the United States, and the other half in Texas,* for he lay at right angles with the line.

The authorities of both sides had frequently found him in that position, but as their separate claims lay severally on the *entire* individual, they were not content to arrest *one half of him* at a time. A great deal of courtesy was at times exhibited by the officers, each pressing the other to break the forms of international law by pulling Old Single bodily over either side of the line. Each was up to trap, and feared the other wished to trick him, and declined the effort which might cause a rupture between Texas and the Union.

On one occasion they were exceedingly pressing on the subject, at first politely so, then teasing each other, and then daring by taunt, and jeer, and jibe,

until they worked themselves into such furious excitement, that "Old Single," their pretended victim, had to command and preserve the peace.

"'Gentle-*men*,'" said he, "you may fun, and fret, and quarrel jist as much as you please in my house —but when tha is any lickin' to be done 'bout these diggins, why 'Old Single' is *thar sure!*—so look out boys, ef you strikes you *dies*. Show your sense, make friends, and let's *liker*. You," nodding to one, "hand me a gourd of water; and You," to another, "pass that bottle, and I'll drink to your better 'quaintance."

The day passed, "Old Single" crosses the line, and one of the *beauties* on each side his cot, all going it like forty at twenty-deck poker—a sociable game, as Sol. Smith says — and, as remarked our informant, "the old man was a perfect *Cumanche horse* at any game whar tha was *curds*."

For the last three months "Old Single" had been mightily distressed—"*mighty oneasy 'bout annexation*"—for he knew he would be compelled to travel. Well, the news of the action of Texas on this great question was received in "Old Single's" vicinity on the 29th of June—the day it reached Fort Jessup.

Next morning "the boys" from Boston and De Kalb—a couple of border villages—after a glory gathering about annexation, determined to storm "'Old Single," and "*rout*" him. They accordingly, *en masse à-la-regulator,* started off for his cabin, and on arriving near it, a consultation was held, and it was determined that bloodshed was useless—as it was certain to occur if violence was resorted to—and that a flag of truce should be sent into the fortress, offering terms.

The old man was found in a gloomy mood, with a pack strapped to his back, in woodsman style. "Old *Centresplit,*" his friend of thirty years' standing, his rifle, his favourite, his all, was laid across his knees, and he in deep thought, his eyes resting on vacancy. As the delegation entered, he looked up:

"Well, boys, the time is *cum,* and Texas and you is annixated; *but I ain't,* and I *ain't a gwoin' to be nuther!—so take care how you raise my dander; I can shoot sum yet!*"

The party explained, and it was agreed the old fellow should take up the march *upon the line* for the nearest point on Red River, the party escorting him at twenty paces distant on either side—that the

last mile should be run—that if he struck the water's edge first, he should go free—if otherwise, he was to be taken and rendered up a victim to the offended dignity of the laws.

"*Agreed,*" said Old Single, "it's a bargain. Boys, tha is a *gallon* in that barrel, let's finish it in a friendly way, and then travel."

The thing was done, the travel accomplished, and the race, fast and furious, was being done. The old fellow led the crowd, hallooing at his topmost voice as he gained the river:

"Hoopee!—Hurrah!—*I ain't annixated!—I'm off—I ain't no whar—nuther in the States nor Texas,* BUT IN ARKANSAW!" swam to the opposite shore, fired a volley, gave three cheers, and retired victorious.

XXV.

MAJOR JONES'S COURTSHIP.

LETTER I.

Pineville, May 28th, 1842.

Dear Sir,

Ever sense you was down to Pineville, it's been on my mind to rite you a letter, but the boys lowed I'd better not, 'cause you mought take me off 'bout my spellin' and dictionary. But something happened to me t'other night, so monstrous provokin', that I can't help tellin' you about it. It all came of snuffing ashes over a soft wood fire, and I reckon I've wished there was no sich plagy stuff, as soft

wood, more 'n five hundred times sense it happened. You know the Stallinses lives on the plantation in the summer, and goes to town in the winter. Well, Miss Mary Stallins, who you know is the darlinest gal in the county, came home t'other day to see her folks. You know she's been to the Female College, down to Macon, for most a year now. Before she went, she used to be as plain as an old shoe, and used to go fishin' and huckelberryin' with us, with nothin' but a calico sun-bonnet on, and was the wildest thing you ever saw. Well, I always used to have a sort of sneakin' notion of Mary Stallins, and so when she come, I brushed up, and was 'termined to have a rite serious talk with her 'bout old matters; not knowin' but she might be captivated by some of them Macon fellers.

So, sure enough, off I started, unbeknowin' to anybody, and rode rite over to the plantation, (you know ours is rite jinin' the widder Stallinses.) Well, when I got thar, I felt a little sort of sheepish; but I soon got over that, when Miss Carline said, (but she didn't mean me to hear her)—

"There Pinny, (that's Miss Mary's nick-name, you know,) there's your bo come."

Miss Mary looked mighty sort o' redish when I

shuck her hand and told her howdy; and she made a sort of a stoop over and a dodge back, like the little gals does to the school-marm, and said:

"Good evenin', Mr. Jones," (she used to always call me jest Joe.)

"Take a chair, Joseph," said Miss Carline; and we sot down in the parlor, and I begun talkin' to Miss Mary 'bout Macon, and the long ride she had, and the bad roads, and the monstrous hot weather, and the like.

She didn't say much, but was in a mighty good humor and laughed a heap. I told her, I never seed sich a change in anybody. Nor I never did. Why she didn't look like the same gal—good gracious! she looked so nice and trim, with her hair all komed down long side of her face, so slick and shiny as a mahogany burow. When she laughed she didn't open her mouth like she used to; and she set up strait and still in her chair, and looked so different, but so monstrous pretty! I ax'd her a heap of questions, 'bout how she liked Macon, and the Female College, and so forth; and she told me a heap 'bout 'em. But old Miss Stallins and Miss Carline and Miss Kesiah, and all of 'em, kep all the time interruptin' us, axin' 'bout mother; if she was

well, and if she was gwine to the Spring church next Sunday, and what luck she had with her crap, and all sich stuff, and I do believe I told the old women more'n twenty times that mother's old turkey hen was settin' on fourteen eggs.

Well, I wasn't to be backed out that-a-way—so I kept it a goin' the best I could, til bimeby old Miss Stallins let her knittin' fall three or four times, and then begun to nod and snap back like a fishin'-pole that was all the time gitin bites. I seed the galls lookin' at one another, and pinchin' one another's elbows, and Miss Mary said, she wondered what time it was, and said the college disciplines, or somethin' like that, didn't 'low late hours. I seed how the game was gwine—but howsumever, I kep talkin' to her like a cotton gin in packin' time, as hard as I could clip it, til bimeby the old lady went to bed, and arter a bit the gals all cleared, and left Miss Mary to herself. That was jest the thing I wanted.

"Well, she sot on one side of the fire-place, and I sot on t'other, snuffin' ashes, war there was nothin' but a lighted chunk burnin' to give light. Well, we talked, and I know you would like to hear all we talked about, but that would be too long. When I'm very interested in anything, or git

bothered 'bout anything, I always leans forred and pokes the fire, if there be any. Well, we sot thar and talked, 'bout everything a'most. I axed her if she had any bos down to Macon.

"'Oh, yes,' she said, and then she went on and named over Matthew Matin, Nat Filosophy, and a whole heap of fellers with foreign, outlandish names, that she'd been kepin' company with 'most all her time.

"'Well,' says I, 'I s'pose they're 'mazin' poplar with you, ain't they, Miss Mary?' for I felt mighty oneasy, and dug away at the fire like anything.

"'Yes,' ses she, 'they're the most interestin companions I ever had, and I am anxious to resume their pleasant society.'

"I tell you what, that sort o' stumped me, and I poked up the fire and made it 'flicker and flare' like the mischief; it was a good thing it did, for I blushed as blue as a Ginny squash.

"'Then I s'pose you'r gwine to forget old acquaintances,' ses I, 'sense you's been to Macon, 'mong them lawyers and doctors; is you, Miss Mary? You thinks more of them than you does of anybody else, I s'pose?'

"'Oh!' ses she, 'I'm devoted to them—I think of them day and night!'

"That was too much—it shot me right up, and I sot as still as could be for more'n a minute. I never felt so warm behind the ears afore in all my life. Thunder! how my blood did bile up all over me, and I felt like I could knock Matthew Matin into a squash if he'd only been thar. Miss Mary sot with her handkerchief up to her face, and I looked rite into the fire-place. The blue blazes was runnin' round over the chunk, ketchin' hold here and lettin' go thar, sometimes gwine 'most out, and then blazin' up a little. I couldn't speak—and was makin' up my mind for tellin' her the siteation of my heart, when I gave the soft wood chunk a desperate poke, and slap it went right over, and out it went spang!

"I swar I never did feel so in all my born days. I didn't know what to do.

"'My Lord, Miss Mary,' ses I, 'I didn't go to do it; jest tell me the way to the kitchen, and I'll go and git a light.'

"But she never said nothin', so I sot down agin, thinkin she'd gone to git one herself, for it was pitch dark, and I couldn't see my hand afore my face.

"Well, I sot thar and ruminated, and waited a long time, but she didn't come, so I begun to think maybe she wasn't gone. I couldn't hear nothin', nor I couldn't see nothin'; so bimeby ses I, very low, for I didn't want to wake up the family, ses I:

"'Miss Mary! Miss Mary!' but nobody answered.

"Thinks I, what's to be done? I tryed agin.

"'Miss Mary! Miss Mary!' ses I, but it was no use.

"Then I heard the gals snickerin' and laughin' in the next room, and I begun to see how it was; Miss Mary was gone, and left me thar alone.

"'Whar's my hat?' ses I, pretty loud, so somebody might tell me; but they only laughed worse.

"I begun to feel about the room, and the fust thing I knew, spang! goes my head agin a dore that was standin' open. The fire flew, and I couldn't help but swar a little.

"'Drot the dore,' ses I, 'whar's my hat?'

"But nobody said nothin', so I begun to think it war best to git out the best way I could, and never mind my hat. Well, I got through the

parlor dor, after rakin' my shins three or four times agin the chairs, and was falin' along through the entry for the frunt dore; but somehow I was so flustrated that I tuk the rong way, and bimeby, kerslash I went, rite over Miss Stallinses spinnin'-wheel onto the floor! I hurt myself a good deal; but that didn't make me half so mad as to hear then confounded gals a gigglin' and laughin' at me.

"Oh!" said one of them, (it was Mis Kesiak, for I knowed her voice) "there goes mother's wheel! My Lord!"

I tried to set the thing up, but it seemed to have more'n twenty legs, and wouldn't stand up nohow—maybe it was broke. I went out of the dore, but I hadn't got down the steps, when bow! wow! wow! comes four or five infurnal grate big coon-dogs rite at me.

"Git out! git out! hellow Cato! call off your dogs," ses I, as loud as I could.

But Cato was sound asleep, and if I hadn't a run back into the hall, and got out of the frunt way as quick as I could, them devils would o' chawed my bones for true.

When I got to my horse, I felt like a feller

just out of a hornet's nest; and I reckon I went home a little of the quickest. Next mornin' old Miss Stallins sent my hat by a little nigger; but I hain't seed Mary Stallins sense. Now you see what comes of snuffin' ashes over a soft wood fire. No more from

Your frend, till deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER II.

Pineville, August 29th, 1842.

Dear Sir,

Jest as I spected, only a thunderin' sight wurse! You know I said that we wer gwine to have a betallion muster in Pineville. Well, the muster has tuck place, and I reckon sich other doins you never hearn of afore.

I come in town the nite afore, with my regimentals in a bundle, so they couldn't be siled by ridin', and as soon as I got my breckfast, I begun rigin' out for the muster. I had a bran new pair of boots, made jest a purpose, with long legs to 'em and a shaperdebraw, with one of the tallest kind of

red fethers in it, a blu cloth regimental cote, all titivated off with gold and buttons, and a pair of yeller britches of the finest kind. Well, when I went to put 'em on, I couldn't help but cuss all the tailors and shoomakers in Georgia. In the fust place, my britches like to busted and wouldn't reach more'n half way to my jacket, then it tuck two niggers to git my boots on; and my coat had tail enuff for a bed-quilt, and stood rite strait out behind like a fan-tail pidgin—it wouldn't hang rite no how you could pull it. I never was so dratted mad, specially when thar was no time to fix things, for the fellers were comin' in in gangs and beginnin' to call for me to come out and take the command. Eckspectation was ris considerable high, cause I was pledged to quip myself in uniformity to the law, if I was lected Majer.

Well, bimeby I went to the dore and told Bill Skinner and Tom Cullers to fix ther companys, and have 'em all redy when I made my pearance. Then the fuss commenced. Thar wasn't but one drum in town, and Bill Skinner swore *that* should drum for *his* company, cause it longed to that beat; and Tom Cullers swore the nigger should drum for *his* company, cause he longed to his crowd.

Thar was the old harry to pay, and it was gittin' wurse. I didn't know what to do, for they was all comin' to me bout it, and shinin' and disputin' so I couldn't hardly hear one from tother. Thinks I, I must show my thority in this bisness; so says I, "In the name of the State of Georgia, I cummand the drum to drum for me. I's Majer of this betallion and I's cummander of the musick too!" The thing tuck fust rate; thar was no more rumpus bout it, and I sot the niggers a drummin' and fifin' as hard as they could split rite afore the tavern dore.

It was monstrous diffikil to git the men to fall in; thar hain't been none of them deformed drunkerds down here yit, and the way the fellers does love peach and hunny is mazin. Bimeby Bill Skinner tuck a stick and made a long strate streak in the sand, and then hollered out, "Oh, yes! oh, yes! all you as belongs to Coon-holler beat is to git in a strate line on this trail!" Tom Cullers made a streak for his beat, and the fellers begun to string themselves along in a strate line, and in about a quarter of a ower they wer all settled like bees on a bean-pole, pretty considerable strate. Arter a while they sent word to

me that they was all reddy, and I had my horse fotched up to tother side of the tavern; but when I cum to him, the bominable fool didn't know me sumhow, and begun kickin' and prancin', and cavortin' about like mad. I made the niggers hold him till I got on, then I sent word round to the drummer to drum like blazes as soon as he seed me turn the corner, and to the men to be redy to salute. My sword kep rattlin' agin the side of my hors, and the fool was skeered so he didn't know which eend he stood on; and kep dancin' about and squattin' and rarein' so I couldn't hardly hold on to him.

The nigger went and told the men what I sed; and when I thought they was all reddy, round I went in a canter, with my sash and regimentals flyin' and my red fether wavin' as graceful as a corn tossel in a whirlwind; but jest as I got to the corner ther was a fuss like heaven and yearth was cumin' together. Rattlebang, wher-r-r-r-r went the drum, and the nigger blowed the fife rite out strate, till his eyes was sot in his hed—harra! hey-y-y! hurra! went all the niggers and everybody else—my horse wheelin' aud pitchin' worse than ever, rite up to the muster—and, fore I could

draw my breth, bang! bang! bang! de bang! bang! bang! went every gun in the crowd, and all I knowed was, I was whirlin', and pitchin', and swingin' about in the smoke and fire till I cum full length rite smack on the ground, "in all the pride, pomp, and circumstances of glorious war," as Mr. Shakspear ses.

Lucky enough I didn't git hurt; but my cote was split clear up to the coller, my yaller britches busted all to flinders, and my shaperdebraw and fether all nocked into a perfect mush. Thunder and lightnin! thinks I, what must be a man's feelin's in a rale battle, whar they're shootin' in good yearnest! Cum to find out, it was all a mistake; the men didn't know nothing bout military ticktacks, and thought I ment a regular forth of July salute.

I had to lay by my regimentals—but I know'd my caracter was at stake as a officer, and I tarmined to go on with the muster. So I told Skinner and Cullers to git the men strate agin and when they was all in a line I sorted 'em all out. The fellers what had guns I put in frunt, them what had sticks in the rare, and them what had no shoes, down to the bottum by them elves, so nobody couldn't

tramp on ther tose. A good menny of 'em begun to forgit which was ther rite hand and which was ther left; and sum of 'em begun to be very diffikil to manage, so I termined to march 'em rite out to a old field, whar they couldn't git no more licker, specially sense I was bleeged to wear my tother clothes.

Well, arter I got 'em all fixed, ses I, "Music! quick time! by the rite flank, file left, march!" they stood fer bout a minit lookin' at me—"by flank mar-r-r-ch!" ses I, as loud as I could holler. Then they begun lookin' at one another and hunchin' one another with ther elbows, and the fust thing I know'd they was all twisted up in a snarl, goin' both ways at both ends, and all machin' through other in the middle, in all sorts of helter skelter fashion. "Halt!" ses I, "halt! wher upon yeath is you all gwine!"—and thar they was, all in a huddle. They knowed better, but jest wanted to bother me, I do b'lieve.

"Never mind," ses I, "gentlemen, we'll try that revolution over agin." So when I got 'em all strait agin, I splained it to 'em, and gin 'em the word so they could understand it. "Forward march!" ses I, and away they went, not all together, but two by

two, every feller waitin' til his turn cum to step, so fore the barefoot ones got started, I couldn't hardly see to t'other eend of the betallion. I let 'em go ahead til we got to the old field, and then I tried to stop 'em; but I had 'em in gangs all over the field in less than no time. "Close up!" ses I, as loud as I could holler; but they only stood and looked at me like they didn't know what I meant. "Git into a strait line again," ses I. That brung 'em all together, and I told 'em to rest a while, before I put 'em through the manuel.

'Bout this time out cum a whole heap of fellers with sum candidates, and wanted I should let 'em address the betallion. I told 'em I didn't care, long as they didn't kick up no row. Well, the men wer all high up for hearin' the speeches of the candidates, and got round 'em thick as flies round a fat gourd. Ben Ansley—he's the poplarest candidate down here—begun to show by gittin' on a stump, and takin' his hat off rite in the brilin' hot sun.

"Feller-citizens," ses he, "I spose you all know as how my friends is fotched me out to represent this county in the next legislater—I am posed to counterfit money and shinplasters; I am posed to abolition and free niggers, to the morus multicaulis

and the Florida war, and all manner of shecoonery whatsumever! If I's lected your respectable representation, I shall go in for good munny, twenty cents for cotton, and no taxes, and shall go for bolishin' prisonment for debt and the Central Bank. I hope you'll all cum up to the poles of the lection, and vote like a patriot for your very humble servant —Amen."

Then he jumped down and went round shakin' hands. "Hurra for Ben Ansley! Ansley for ever!" shouted every feller. "Down with the bank—devil take the shinplasters and all the rale-roads!" ses Captain Skinner. "Silence for a speech from Squire Pettybone!" "Hurra for Pettybone!"

Squire Pettybone was a little short fat man, what had run afore, and knowed how to talk to the boys.

"Frends and feller-citizens," ses he, "I's once more a candidate for your sufferins, and I want to splain my sentiments to you. You've jest hearn a grate deal 'bout the Central Bank. I ain't no bank man—I'm 'posed to all banks—but I is a frend to the pore man, and is always reddy to stand up for his constitutional rites. When the Central Bank

put out its munny it was good, and rich men got it and made use of it when it was good; but now they want to buy it in for less nor what it's worth to pay ther dets to the bank, and they is tryin' to put it down, and make the pore man lose by it. What does they want to put the bank down for, if it ain't to cheat the pore man who's got sum of it? If I's 'lected, I shall go for makin' the banks redeem ther munny in silver and gold, or put every devil of 'em into the penitentiary to makin' nigger shoes. I's a hard munny man and in favor of the Vetos. I goes for the pore man agin the rich, and if you 'lect me that's what I mean to do."

Then *he* begun shakin' hands all round. "Hurra for Squire Pettybone! hurra for the bank and the veto!" shouted some of the men—"Hurra for Ansley! down with the bank!" "Silence for Mr. Johnson's speech!" "Hurra for Harrison!" "Hurra for the Vetos!" "Hurra for Jackson! I can lick any veto on the ground!" "Silence!" "Hurra for Ansley, no bank!" "Whar's them vetos what's agin Ansley—let me at 'em!" "Fight! fight! make a ring! make a ring!"—"Whoop!" hollered Bill Sweeny, "I'm the blossom

—go it shirt-tail!" "Hit 'em Sweeny!"—"'Tention, Betallion!" ses I, but it want no use—they was at it rite in the middle and all round the edges, and I know'd the quicker I got out of that bilin' the better for my wholsum. Thar they was, up and down, five or six in a heap, rollin' over and crawlin' out from under, bitin' and scratchin', gougin' and strikin', kickin' and cussin', head and heels all through other, none of 'em knowin' who they hurt, or who hurt them—all the same whether they hit Ansley or veto, the blossom or Pettybone. The candidates was runnin' about pullin' and haulin', and tryin' ther best to stop it; but you couldn't hear nothin' but cussin', and "bank" and "veto," and "let me at 'em," "I'm your boy," "let go my eyes!" and sich talk for more'n twenty minits, and then they only kep 'em apart by holdin' 'em off like dogs till they got dun pantin'.

It want no use to try to get 'em into line agin. Some of 'em had got manuel exercise enuff, and was knocked and twisted out of all caracter, and it would be no use to try to put 'em through the manuel in that situation. Lots of 'em had ther eyes bunged up so they couldn't "eyes right!" to save 'em, so I turned 'em over to ther captains, accordin' to law,

and ain't sponsible for nothin' that tuck place after I left. No more from

Your frend, til deth

Jos. Jones.

P.S.—Miss Mary most fainted when she heard the noos 'bout my hoss throwin' me. Don't you think that's a good sign?

LETTER III.

Pineville, December 20th, 1842.

Dear Sir,

It seems our folks always is in a fuss. First it was movin', then it was hog killin', and now everything's topsy-turvy makin' reddy for Crismus. I do believe the niggers is scowered every spot from the garret to the dore-steps; and every time I comes into the hous they's all hollerin' out: "Thar, now, Mas Joe, jist look at your tracks!" and "Don't you spit on the herth, for it's just redened!" and "Don't you spit agin the jam!" and sich foolery, jist as if people's houses wasn't made for 'em to live in.

It really puts me out of all patience to see such nonsensical doins. And mother, she's had all the niggers choppin' sasage-meat to make mince-pies, and poundin' spice and ginger, and makin' marvels, and beatin' eggs to make pound-cake, and all sorts of sweet doin's for Crismus, for when she takes anything into her head, she ain't a gwine to be outdone not by nobody.

She ses Crismus don't come but once a-year now-a-days, and she's gwine to treat it handsum when it does cum—she's gwine to show the Stallinses that she's use to as good livin' as most of folkes. Well, I glory in her spunk, but it's monstrous expensive and unpleasant to go things on the big figer that she's on now; it never ought to be done only to wedin's, and it wouldn't do then, whar ther was to be many in the same family. Do tell us what upon yearth all this talk means about the world comin' to a eend next April. I've heard a great deal about Miller's doctrine lately. Now I don't like to believe no sich nonsense; but if it was to come out true, I wouldn't like to be so tuck in.

Mother and old Miss Stallins, and two or three more old ladies, is in a mighty fidget about it, and mother dreamed she seed two moons t'other night,

and one of 'em was all blazin' with fire, and flyin' about in the sky like all wrath. I don't 'zactly know what to think about it, but ther's one thing sartin, it's got to begin monstrous early in the mornin' on the third day of April, if I ain't up to see it. If anybody was to set the woods a fire 'bout Pineville, jest at that time, I wouldn't like to answer for the consequence among the old wimin.

But I'm not gwine to let sich matters interfere with my marryin' spekelations. I call it spekelation, for, you know, ther's no tellin' how these things is gwine to turn out. In the fust place, it's a chance if a body git's the gall he's courtin', and after *he's* got her all to himself for better or for worse, it's a chance agin if she don't turn out a monstrous site worse nor he tuck her for. But I think mine's a pretty safe business, for Miss Mary is jest a leetle the smartest, and best, and the butifulest gall in Georgia. I've seed her two or three times lately, and I ain't more'n half so afraid of her as I used to be. I told her t'other night I had a Crismus gift for her, which I noped she would take and keep.

"What is it, Majer?" ses she.

"Oh!" ses I, "it's something what I wouldn't give nobody else in the world!"

"Well, but what is it—*do* tell me?"

"Something," ses I, "what you stole from me a long time ago, and sense you've got it I want you to keep it, and give me one like it in return."

"Well *do* tell me what it is, fust," ses she and I seed her cut her eye at Miss Carline, and sort o' smile.

"But will you give me one in return?" ses I.

"What, Majer—tell me what?"

"I'll tell you Crismus eve," ses I. "But will you give me *yours* in return?"

"*Yours!* eh, my ——," then her face got as red as a poppy, and she looked down.

"You know what, Miss Mary," ses I, "will you."

She didn't say nothin', but blushed worse and worse.

"Now, mind," ses I, "I must have a answer Crismus eve."

"Well," ses she—and then she looked up and laughed, and sed—"exchange is no robbery, is it, sister Carline."

"No sis," ses she, "but I reckon Joseph got his pay bout the same time you stole his ——."

"Stop, stop, sister, Majer didn't say his heart ——."

"There, there!" ses Miss Carline and Miss Kesiah, clappin' ther hands, and laughin' as loud as they could—"there, there, little innocent sister's let the cat out o' the bag, at last. I told you so, Majer."

I never felt so good afore in all my life, and Miss Mary, pore gall, hid her face in her hands and begun to cry, she felt so about it—that's the way with the galls, they always cry when they feel the happiest; but I soon got her in a good humour, and then I went home. I'm gwine to bring her rite up to the scratch Crismus, or I ain't here. I'll tell you how I cum out in my next. No more from

Your friend, til deth.

Jos. Jones.

LETTER IV.

Pineville, December 27th, 1842.

Dear Sir,

Crismus is over, and the thing's ded. You know I told you in my last letter I was gwine to bring Miss Mary up to the chalk a Crismus. Well, I done it, slick as a whistle, though it come mighty nigh bein' a serious undertakin'. But I'll tell you all about the whole circumstance.

The fact is, I's made my mind up more'n twenty times to jest go and comé rite out with the whole business; but whenever I got whar she was, and whenever she looked at me with her witchin' eyes, and kind o' blushed at me, I always felt sort o' skeered and fainty, and all what I made up to tell her was forgot, so I couldn't think of it to save me. But you's a married man, Mr. Thompson, so I couldn't tell you nothing about popin' the question as they call it. It's a mighty grate favour to ax of a rite pretty gall, and to people as ain't used to it, it goes monstrous hard, don't it? They say widders don't mind it more'n nothin'. But I'm makin' a transgression, as the preacher sez.

Crismus eve I put on my new suit, and shaved my face as slick as a smoothin' iron, and went over to old Miss Stallinses. As soon as I went into the parler whar they was all settin' round the fire, Miss Carline and Miss Kesiah both laughed rite out.

"There, there," ses they, "I told you so, I knew it would be Joseph."

"What's I done, Miss Carline?" ses I.

"You come under little sister's chicken-bone, and I do b'lieve she knew you was comin' when she put it over the dore."

"No I didn't—I didn't no such thing, now," ses Miss Mary, and her face blushed red all over.

"Oh, you needn't deny it," ses Miss Kesiah, "you 'long to Joseph now, jest as sure as ther's any charm in chicken-bones."

I knowd that was a first-rate chance to say something, but the dear little creater looked so sorry and kep' blushin' so, I couldn't say nothin' zactly to the pint, so I tuck a chair and reached up and tuck down the bone and put it in my pocket.

"What are you gwine to do with that old bone now, Majer?" ses Miss Mary.

"I'm gwine to keep it as long as I live," ses I, "as a Crismus present from the handsomest gall in Georgia."

When I sed that, she blushed worse and worse.

"Ain't you shamed, Majer?" ses she.

"Now you ought to give *her* a Crismus gift, Joseph, to keep all *her* life," sed Miss Carline.

"Ah," ses old Miss Stallins, "when I was a gall we used to hang up our stockins—"

"Why, mother!" ses all of 'em, "to say stockins rite afore—"

Then I felt a little streaked too, 'cause they was blushin' as hard as they could.

"Highty-tity!" ses the old lady, "what monstrous finement. I'd like to know what harm ther is in stockins. People now-a-days is gittin' so mealy-mouthed they can't call nothin' by its rite name, and I don't see as they's any better than the old time people was. When I was a gall like you, child, I use to hang up my stockins and git 'em full of presents."

The gals kep laughin'.

"Never mind," ses Miss Mary, "Majer's got to give me a Crismus gift—won't you, Majer?"

"Oh, yes," ses I, "you know I promised you one."

"But I didn't mean *that*," ses she.

"I've got one for you, what I want you to keep all your life, but it would take a two-bushel bag to hold it," ses I.

"Oh, that's the kind," ses she.

"But will you keep it as long as you live?" ses I.

"Certainly I will, Majer."

"Monstrous 'finement now-a-days—old people don't know nothin' 'bout perliteness," said old Miss Stallins, jest gwine to sleep with her nittin' in her hand.

"Now you hear that, Miss Carline," ses I. "She ses she'll keep it all her life."

"Yes, I will," ses Miss Mary; "but what is it?"

"Never mind," ses I, "you hang up a bag big enuff to hold it and you'll find out what it is, when you see it in the mornin'."

Miss Carline winked at Miss Kesiah, and then whispered to her; then they both laughed and looked at me as mischievous as they could. They spicioned something.

"You'll be sure to give it to me now, if I hang up a bag," ses Miss Mary.

"And promise to keep it," ses I.

"Well, I will, cause I know that you wouldn't give me nothin' that wasn't worth keepin'."

They all agreed they would hang up a bag for me to put Miss Mary's Crismus present in, in the back porch, and 'bout nine o'clock I told 'em good evenin' and went home.

I sot up till midnight, and when they was all gone to bed, I went softly into the back gate, and went up to the porch, and thar, shore enuff, was a grate big meal-bag hangin to the jice. It was monstrous unhandy to git to it, but I was 'tarmined not to back out. So I sot some chairs on top of a bench and got hold of the rope and let myself down into the bag; but jest as I was gittin' in, the bag swung agin the chairs, and down they went with a terrible racket. But nobody didn't wake up but old Miss Stallinses grate big cur dog, and here he cum rippin' and tarin' through the yard like rath, and round and round he went tryin' to find what was the matter. I sot down in the bag and didn't breathe louder nor a kitten, for fear he'd find me out, and after a while he quit barkin'. The wind begun to blow 'bominable cold, and the old bag kep turnin' round and swingin' so, it made me sea-sick as the mischief. I was 'fraid to move for fear the

rope would brake and let me fall, and thar I sot with my teeth ratlin' like I had a ager. It seemed like it would never come daylight, and I do b'lieve f I didn't love Miss Mary so powerful I would froze to deth; for my hart was the only spot that felt warm, and it didn't beat more'n two licks a minit, only when I thought how she would be sprised in the mornin', and then it went in a canter. Bimeby the cussed old dog come up on the porch and begun to smell about the bag, and then he barked like he thought he'd treed something.

"Bow! wow! wow!" ses he. Then he'd smell agin, and try to git up to the bag.

"Git out!" ses I, very low, for fear they would hear me.

"Bow! wow! wow!" ses he.

"Be gone! you 'bominable fool," ses I, and I felt all over in spots, for I 'spected every minit he'd nip me, and what made it worse, I didn't know whar 'bouts he'd take hold.

"Bow! wow! wow!"

Then I tried coaxin':

"Come here, good feller," ses I, and whistled a little to him, but it wasn't no use. Thar he stood and kep up his eternal whinin' and barkin', all

night. I couldn't tell when daylight was breakin', only by the chickens crowin', and I was monstrous glad to hear 'em, for if I'd had to stay thar one hour more, I don't b'lieve I'd ever got out of that bag alive.

Old Miss Stallins come out fust, and as soon as she saw the bag, ses she:

"What upon yeath has Joseph went and put in that bag for Mary? I'll lay it's a yearlin' or some live animal, or Bruin wouldn't bark at it so."

She went in to call the galls, and I sot thar, shiverin' all over so I couldn't hardly speak if I tried to—but I didn't say nothin'. Bimeby they all come runnin' out.

"My lord, what is it?" ses Miss Mary.

"Oh, it's alive!" ses Miss Kesiah, "I seed it move."

"Call Cato, and make him cut the rope," ses Miss Carline, "and let's see what it is. Come here, Cato, and git this bag down."

"Don't hurt it for the world," ses Miss Mary.

Cato untied the rope that was round the jice, and let the bag down easy on the floor, and I tumbled out all covered with corn meal, from hed to foot.

"Goodness gracious!" ses Miss Mary, "if it ain't the Majer himself!"

"Yes," ses I, "and you know you promised to keep my Crismus present as long as you lived."

The galls laughed themselves almost to deth, and went to brushin' off the meal as fast as they could, sayin' they was gwine to hang that bag up every Crismus til they got husbands too. Miss Mary—bless her bright eyes—she blushed as butiful as a morninglory, and sed she'd stick to her word. She was rite out of bed, and her hair wasn't komed, and her dress wasn't fixt at all, but the way she looked pretty was rale distractin'. I do b'lieve if I was froze stiff, one look at her charmin' face, as she stood lookin' down to the floor with her rogish eyes, and her bright curls fallin' all over her snowy neck, would fotch'd me too. I tell you what, it was worth hangin' in a meal-bag from one Crismus to another to feel as happy as I have ever sense.

I went home after we had the laugh out, and set by the fire till I got thawed. In the forenoon all the Stallinses come over to our house and we had one of the greatest Crismus dinners that ever was seed in Georgia, and I don't b'lieve a happier company ever sot down to the same table. Old Miss Stallins and mother settled the match, and talked over every thing that ever happened in ther families, and laughed at me and Mary, and cried 'bout ther

ded husbands, cause they wasn't alive to see ther children married.

It's all settled now, 'cept we haint sot the weddin' day. I'd like to have it all over at once, but young galls always like to be engaged a while, you know, so I spose I must wait a month or so. Mary (she ses I musn't call her Miss Mary now,) has been a good deal of trouble and botheration to me; but if you could see her, you wouldn't think I ought to grudge a little sufferin' to git sich a sweet little wife.

You must come to the weddin' if you possibly kin. I'll let you know when. No more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER V.

Pineville, January 5th, 1842.

Dear Sir,

Ther's been a awful catasterfy in Pineville sense I rit my last letter to you. Little did I think then what was a comin', though I always thought some

cussed thing would turn up jest to spile my happiness.

Last nite I was over to old Miss Stallinses, talkin' long with Mary and the gals, and makin' calculations about the weddin' and hous-keepin', and sich things, when all at once ther was a terrible shakin' and rackin' like the house was gwine to tumble down a top of us. The gals all squalled out as loud as they could holler, and cotched rite hold of me, and hugged close to me til they almost choked my breth out of me, and old Miss Stallins fainted away into a fit of the highstericks. The shakin' didn't last more'n a minit, but it had a monstrous curious feelin' while it did last.

When it was over the gals fell to rubin' the old woman's hands, and I poured a gourd of water in her face to bring her too. Bimeby she got better, but I do b'lieve the yeath-quake has shuck all her sense out of her, for she ses she knows the world is cumin' to a eend now, shore enuff, and she ses me and Mary musent git married not til after next April. She ses she didn't dream bout them two moons for nothin', and that the yeath shakin' so is a sure sign that sumthing's gwine to happen. Mary was skeered monstrous too, but she soon got over it,

and so did Miss Kesiah, and Miss Carline, but old Miss Stallins has been talkin' bout nothin' else but the world comin' to a eend ever sense. She ses nobody ought to think bout anything else but gittin' redy to die, and that it's wicked to think bout weddins and such like, now. I told her, what if the world was to come to a eend, ses I, if we was married her daughter wouldn't be left a widder, and I never could die contented no way, without I was married fust.

But it ain't no use to argy with her, for she b'lieves in parson Miller now like a book, and won't listen to no sort of reasonin'. She ses it was jest so when old Mr. Noah bilt the ark — no body didn't b'lieve him till the water was up to ther chins, and then they couldn't help themselves.

So you see what a fix I'm in — after all my trouble, and jest when I thought I was gwine to be the happiest man in Georgia, a yeath-quake must come jest to upset my calculations. I haint no notion of puttin' off the weddin' so long, but I spose I might wait if I can't do no better. I'm in hopes though, old Miss Stallins will git over her skeer, and come to her senses long afore

April. I'll be sure to let you know. No more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER VI.

Pineville, February 2nd, 1843.

Dear Sir,

Ever sense I writ my last letter to you, things is gone on jest as strate as a shingle, and the only thing what troubles me is, I'm afraid it's all too good to last. It's always ben the way with me ever sense I can remember, whenever I'm the happyest sum blamed thing seems to turn up jest to upset all my calculations, and now, though the day is sot for the weddin', and the Stallinses is gittin' everything redy as fast as they can, I wouldn't be s'prised much if some 'bominable thing was to happen, some yeath-quake or something, jest to bust it all up agin, though I should hate it monstrous.

Old Miss Stallins red that piece in the Miscellany 'bout the mistake in Parson Miller's figers, and I do

b'lieve she's as glad about it as if she was shore she would live a whole thousand years more herself. She ses she hain't got no objections to the weddin' now, for me and Mary'll have plenty of time to make a fortin for our children and rais 'em up as they ought to be. She ses she always wondered how Mr. Miller could cifer the thing out so strait, to the very day, without a single mistake, but now he's made sich a terrible blunder of a whole thousand years, she ses she knows he ain't no smarter nor other people, if he was raised at the north.

It's really surprisin', how 'mazin' pop'lar it does make a body to be engaged to be married to a butiful young lady. Sense the thing's leaked out, everybody's my pertickeler frend, and I can't meet nobody wherever I go, but what wants to congratilate me on my good fortin, 'cept Cousin Pete and two or three other fellers, who look sort o' like they wanted to laugh and couldn't. Almost every night Mary and me is invited to a party. T'other night we went to one to old Squire Rogerses, whar I got my dander up a little the worst I've had it for some time. I don't b'lieve you have ever hearn of jest sich a fool trick as they played on me. Ther was a

good many thar, and as the Squire don't 'low dancin', they all played games and tricks, and sich foolishness to pass away the time, which to my notion's a 'bominable site worse than dancin'.

Cousin Pete was thar splurgin' about in the biggest, and with his dandy-cut trowsers and big whiskers, and tried to take the shine off everybody else, jest as he always does. Well, bimeby he ses:

"S'pose we play Brother Bob—let's play Brother Bob."

"Yes, let's play that," ses all of 'em; "won't you be Brother Bob, Majer?"

"Who's Brother Bob?" ses I; for I didn't know nothing 'bout it, and that's the way I cum to be so 'bominably tuck in.

"I'll tell you," ses he; "you and somebody else must set down in the chairs and be blindfolded, and the rest must all walk round and round you, and keep tappin' you on the head with sumthing til you gess who bob'd you."

"But how bob me?" ses I.

"Why," ses he, "when any one taps you, you must say, 'Brother, I'm bob'd!' and then they'll ax, 'Who bob'd you?' and if you gess the rite one,

then they must take your place and be bob'd til they gess who bob'd 'em. If you'll be blindfolded I will," ses he, "jest for fun."

"Well," ses I, "anything for fun."

And Cousin Pete sot out two chairs into the middle of the room, and we sot down, and they tied a hankercher round my eyes tite as the mischief, so I couldn't see to gess no more'n if I had no eyes at all.

I hadn't sot no time fore, cawhalux! some one tuck me rite side o' the hed with a dratted big book. The fire flew out o' my eyes in big live coals, and I like to keeled over out of the chair. I felt my blood risin' like a mill-tail, but they all laughed mightily at the fun, and after a while, ses I:

"Brother, I'm bob'd."

"Who bob'd you?" ses they.

I guessed the biggest-fisted feller in the room, but it wasn't him.

The next minit, spang went the book agin Cousin Pete's head.

"Whew!" ses he, "brother, I'm bob'd."

"Who bob'd you?" ses they.

But Cousin Pete didn't gess rite nother, and the fust thing I knowed, whang they tuck me agin. I

was dredful anxious to gess rite, but it was no use, I missed it every time, and so did Cousin Pete, and the harder they hit the harder they laughed. One time they hit me a great deal softlier than the rest.

"Brother, I'm bob'd!" ses I.

"Who bob'd you?" ses they.

"Miss Mary Stallins," ses I.

"No, I never," ses she; and they all roared out worse than ever.

I begin to git monstrous tired of sich fun, which seemed so much like the frogs in the spellin' book —for it was fun to them but it was deth to me— and I don't know what I would done if Mary hadn't come up and ontied the hankercher.

"Let's play something else," ses she, and her face was as red as fire, and she looked sort o' mad out of her eyes.

I seed ther was something wrong in a minit.

Well, they all went on playin' "pawns," and "'pon honour," and "Here we go round the gooseberry bush," and "Oh, sister Feby, how merry we be," and sich nonsense til they played all they knowed, and while they was playin' Mary told me all how cousin Pete bob'd me himself.

This was the most audacious take in I ever hearn of. Do you think the cus didn't set rite down beside me, and never blindfolded himself at all, and hit me every lick himself, and now and then hittin' his knee with the book, to make me b'lieve he was bob'd too. My hed was a singin' with the licks when she told me how he done me, and I do b'lieve if it hadn't been for her I'd gin Cousin Pete sich a lickin' rite thar in that room as he never had afore in his born days. Blazes! but I was mad at fust. But Mary begged me not to raise no fus about it, now it was all over, and she would fix him for his smartness. I hadn't no sort of a ide how she was gwine to do it, but I know'd she was enuff for Cousin Pete any time, so I jest let her go ahed. Well, she tuck the 'bominable fool off to one side and whispered to him like she was gwine to let him into a grate secret. She told him 'bout a new play what she learned down to Macon when she was at the college, called "Interduction to the King and Queen," what she sed was a grate deal funnyer than "Brother Bob," and 'swaded him to help to git 'em all to play.

After she and him made it all up, Cousin Pete

put out three chairs close together in a roe for a throne, and Mary she put a sheet over 'em to make 'em look a little grand. Bill Byers was to be King and Mary was to be Queen.

"Now you must all come in t'other room," ses Cousin Pete, "only them what belongs to the court, and then you must come in and be interduced, one at a time."

"I ain't gwine," ses Tom Stallins, "for ther's some trick in it."

"No ther ain't," ses Cousin Pete, "I'll give you my word ther ain't no trick, only a little fun."

"Well," ses I, "I's had fun enough for one nite."

Mary looked at me and kind o' winked, and, ses she:

"You're one of the court you know, Majer, but jest go out till the court is sumonsed before the throne."

Well, we all went out, and bimeby Bill Byers called out the names of all the lords and ladys what belonged to the court, and we all went in and tuck chairs on both sides of the throne.

Cousin Pete was to be the first one interduced, and Samuwell Rogers was to be the feller what in-

terduced the company. Well, bimeby the dore opened, and in come Cousin Pete, bowin' and scrapin' and twistin' and rigglein' and puttin' on more ares nor a French dancin' master—he beat Crotchett all to smash. The King sot on one side of the throne and the Queen on t'other, leavin' room in the middle for some one else. Sam was so full of laugh at Cousin Pete's antieks that he couldn't hardly speak.

"Doctor Peter Jones," ses he, "I interduce you to ther Majestys the King and Queen."

Cousin Pete scraped about a while and then drapt on one knee, rite afore 'em.

"Rise, gallant knight," ses Bill Byers, "rise, we dub you knight of the royal bath."

Cousin Pete got up and bowed and scraped a few more times, and went to set down between 'em, but they ris up jest as he went to set down, and the fust thing he knowd, kerslosh he went, rite into a big tub full of cold water, with nothing but his hed and heels stickin' out.

He tried to kiss Mary as he was takin' his seat, and if you could jest seed him as he went into that tub with his arms reached out to her, and his mouth sot for a kiss, I do b'lieve you'd laughed more'n

you ever did afore in your life. The fellers was all so spicious that some trick was gwine to be played, that they left the dore open, and when the thing tuck place they all run in shoutin' and laughin' like they would bust ther sides.

Pete got out as quick as he could, and I never seed a feller so wilted down in all my life. He got as mad as a hornet, and sed it was a drotted mean trick to serve enny body so, specially in cold wether. And he went rite off home by himself to dry.

Mary made the niggers take out the middle chair and put the tub of water thar when we was all in t'other room. Pete didn't spicion the trick was gwine to turn out that way—he thought the queen was gwine to sentence every feller what didn't kiss her as he sot down, to do something that would make fun for the rest, and he was jest gwine to open the game. I felt perfectly satisfied after that, and I don't think Cousin Pete will be quite so fond of funny tricks the next time.

But I like to forgot to tell you, my weddin' is to take place—pervidin' ther ain't no more yeath-quakes nor unaccountabel things to prevent—on the 22 of this month, which you know is a famous day

what ought to be celebrated by every genewine patriot in the world. I shall look for you to come, and I hope you will be sure to be thar, for I know you wouldn't grudge the ride jest so see Miss Mary Jones what is to be. We's gwine to have a considerable getherin', jest to please the old folks, and old Miss Stallins see she's gwine to give us a real Georgia weddin' of the old time fashion. No more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

P. S.—I went over t'other nite to see 'em all, and they was as busy as bees in a tar-barrel sowin and makin' up finery. Mary was sowin' something mighty fine and white with ruffles and jigamarees all round it.

"What kind of a thing is that?" ses I.

The gals looked at one another and laughed like they would die, and my poor little Mary (bless her soul) kep getherin' it up in a heap and blushin' dredful.

"Tell him, sis," ses Miss Carline, but Mary looked rite down and didn't say nothin'.

"I'll tell him," ses Miss Kesiah—"It's a——."

"No, you shan't now—stop, stop," ses Mary, and she put her pretty little hand rite on Miss Kesiah's mouth, and looked like she'd cry for a little. I felt so sorry for her, I told 'em I didn't want to know, and they put the things away, and bimeby I went home, but I kep thinkin' all the way what upon yeath it could be. I s'pose I'll find out some day.

LETTER VII.

Pineville, February 24th, 1843.

Dear Sir,

I am too happy and no mistake—the twenty-second of February is over, and the "consumation so devotedly to be wished for" is tuck place. In other words, I's a married man! I ain't in no situation to tell you all how the thing tuck place, not by no means, and if it wasn't for my promis, I don't b'lieve I could keep away from my wife long enough to rite you a letter. Bless her little sole, I didn't think I loved her half so good as I do; but to tell you the rale truth, I do b'lieve I've ben almost out of my senses ever sense nite afore last.

But I must be short this time, while the gals is plagin' Mary in t'other room. They are so bad.

I had the licens got more'n a week ago, and old Mr. Eastman brung home my weddin' suit jest in time. Mother would make me let Cousin Pete wait on me, and Miss Kesiah was bridesmaid. Mother and old Miss Stallins had everything 'ranged in fust rate style long afore the time ariv, and nothing was wantin' but your cumpany to make everything complete.

Well, 'bout sun-down Cousin Pete cum round to my room whar we rigged out for the 'casion, and I don't b'lieve I ever seed him look so good; but if he'd jest tuck off them 'bominable grate big sorrel whiskers of his, he'd looked a monstrous site better. I put on my yaller britches and blue cloth cote, and white satin jacket, and my new beaver hat, and then we druv round to old Squire Rogerses and tuck him into the carriage, and away we went out to Miss Stallinses plantation. When we got thar ther was a most everlastin' getherin' thar waitin' to see the ceremony afore they et ther supper. Everybody looked glad, and old Miss Stallins was flyin' about like she didn't know which eend she stood on.

"Come in, Joseph," ses she, "the galls is in the t'other room."

But I couldn't begin to git in t'other room for the fellers all pullin' and haulin' and shakin' the life out of me to tell me how glad they was.

"Howdy, Majer, howdy," ses old Mr. Byers, "I give you joy," ses he: "yer gwine to marry the flower of the county, as I always sed. She's a monstrous nice gal, Majer."

"That's a fact," ses old Mr. Skinner, "that's a fact, and I hope you'll be a good husband to her, Joseph, and that you'll have good luck with your little—"

"Thank ye, thank ye, gentlemen; come along, Cousin Pete," ses I, as quick as I could git away from 'em.

The dore to t'other room was opened, and in we went. I never was so struck all up in a heap afore —thar sot Mary with three or four more gals, butiful as a angel and blushin' like a rose. When she seed me she kind o' looked down and sort o' smiled, and sed "good evenin'." I couldn't say a word for my life, for more'n a minit. Thar she sot, the dear gal of my hart—and I couldn't help but think to myself what a villain a man must be that

could marry her and then make her unhappy by treatin' her mean; and I determined in my sole to stand atween her and the storms of the world, and to love her, and take care of her, and make her happy, as long as I lived. If you could jest seen her as she was dressed then, and you wasn't a married man, you couldn't help but envy my luck, after all the trubble I've had to git her. She was dressed jest to my likin', in a fine white muslin frock, with short sleeves, and white satin slippers, with her hair all hangin' over her snow-white neck and shoulders in butiful curls, without a single brest-pin or any kind of juelry or ornament, 'cept a little white satin bow on the side of her hed. Bimeby Miss Carline cum in the room.

"Cum, sis, they's all redy," ses she, and ther was grate big tears in her eyes, and she went and give Mary a kiss rite in her mouth, and hugged her a time or two.

We all got up to go. Mary trembled monstrous, and I felt sort o' fainty myself, but I didn't feel nothin' like cryin'.

When we got in the room whar the cumpany was, old Squire Rogers stopt us rite in the middle of the flore and axed us for the licens. Cousin

Pete handed 'em to him, and he red 'em out loud to the people, who was all as still as deth. After talkin' a little he went on:

"If ennybody's got ennything to say why this cupple shouldn't be united in the holy bands of wedlock," ses he, "let 'em now speak, or always afterwards hold ther peace—"

"Oh, my lord! oh, my darlin' daughter! oh, dear laws a massy!" ses old Miss Stallins as loud as she could squall, a clappin' her hands and cryin' and shoutin' like she was at a camp-meetin'.

Thunder and lightnin'! thinks I, here's another yeathquake. But I held on to Mary, and was 'termined that nothin' short of a real bust up of all creation should git her from me.

"Go ahed, Squire," ses Cousin Pete. "It ain't nothin'."

Mary blushed dredful, and seemed like she would drap on the flore.

Miss Carline cum and whispered something to her, and mother and two or three more old wimmin got old Miss Stallins to go in t'other room.

The Squire went through the rest of the bisness in a hurry, and me and Mary was made flesh of one bone and bone of one flesh before the old woman

got over her highstericks. When she got better she cum to me and hugged and kissed me as hard as she could rite afore 'em all, while all the old codgers in the room was salutin' the bride as they called it. I didn't like that part of the ceremony at all, and wanted to change with 'em monstrous bad.

After the marryin' was over we all tuck supper, and the way old Miss Stallinses table was kivered over with good things was uncommon. After playin' and frolickin' till 'bout ten o'clock, the bride's cake was cut, and sich a cake was never baked in Georgia afore. The Stallinses bein' Washingtonians, ther wasn't no wine, but the cake wasn't bad to take jest dry so. 'Bout twelve o'clock the cumpany begun to cut home, all of 'em jest as sober as when they cum.

I had to shake hands agin with 'em all, and tell 'em all good nite.

"Good nite, Cousin Mary," ses Pete, "good nite, Majer," ses he, "I 'spose you ain't gwine back to town to-nite," and then bust rite out in a big laugh, and away he went.

That's jest the way with Peter, he's a good feller enough, but he haint got no better sense.

Mary ses she's sorry she couldn't send you no

more cake, but Mr. Mountgomery's saddlebags wouldn't hold half she rapped up for you. Don't forgit to put our marriage in the Miscellany. No more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER VIII.

Pineville, March 28th, 1843.

Dear Sir,

I really owe you a apology for not writin' to you so long; but the fact is, I've been too happy ever sense I was married, to think about writin' or ennything else much. Besides I use to have time to write nites; but now my time is tuck up with so many things, receivin' cumpany and payin' visits, and goin to quiltens and partys of one kind another, that I haint no time for nothing; and as for writin' letters, when my wife's all the time lookin' over my shoulder, pullin' my ears, and tickelen me, and disputin' bout my spellin', it aint no kind of use to try. She's gone over to mother's this afternoon with her sisters, and her mother's out

in the gardin, lookin' if the frost is killed the peas, so I thought I'd rite you a few lines jest to let you know how we was all cumin' on.

We's all pretty well, 'cept the old woman, who's been in a monstrous flustration 'bout the comet, and the yeathquakes, and the harrycanes, and snow-storms, and sich things, for more'n a month, and I've had a most bominable sore throat, which I got lookin' at the comet jest to please her; but Mary soon cured that with some sage tea and turpentime. I'm livin' with Mary's mother for the present; but that makes mother monstrous jealous, and to satisfy both the old wimin, Mary and me is gwine to housekeepin' next fall to ourselves.

I don't know what to make of the weather—the months is eather got mixed up and January's swapped places with March this time, or that bominable grate big comet is got 'tween our yeath and the sun, and is soakin' all the sunshine up in its everlastin' big tail, which the newspapers say is more'n two thousand miles long. We planted sum corn most a month ago, but it's all rotten or froze to deth; and if the weather don't get no better I don't know when we'll plant enny more; and if cotton's gwine clean down to nothing, I don't mean to put a sead in the ground this year.

Old Miss Stallins reads the Bibel most all the time, and ses she's jest as sure as she wants to be that sumthing's gwine to turn up. She ses that comet's sent to let us know the judgment day's a cumin', and these yeathquakes and harrycanes is signs that it ain't far off. She's all the time lookin' out, and she's got a grate big cow-bell fixed rite by her bed, so the least tetch will make it ring, so she can tell when the yeathquake cums next time. T'other nite old Sooky, the cook, who's 'bout as big as a cow, slipped up in the snow on the porch, and shuck the whole house and made the bell ring. The old woman jumped out of bed and lit a candle in a minit, and had us all up with her hollerin' about the yeathquake; and last nite, when it lightened so, I thought she'd die shore enuff. She sed t'other eend of the world was a fire, and we'd all be burnt into cracklins afore mornin—she shouted and clapped her hands, and prayed, and bid good-by to us all; and I do b'lieve if it hadn't thundered as soon and as loud as it did, she would've kick'd the bucket shore enuff. Jest hearin' so much about that dratted old Miller, has played the wild with the old woman's senses. It's a grate pity ther ain't sum way to stop that old feller's goins on. He ought to be put in the penetentiary for tryin' to make people b'lieve he's

sich a monstrous sight smarter than the Lord ever intended him to be, that he can tell when the world's gwine to cum to a eend. The Bibel ses that thing was to be kep a grate secret and nobody in heaven or yeath should know anything about it. Well, ain't it most oudacious insurance, then, for him to cum and say he's found it out—that he knows all about it? And if he did know it, he ought to have principle and good breedin' enuff not to go and blab it all about, jest to scare fokes to deth. He ought to be brought to the eend of a rope jest for his meanness.

For my part I hain't no notion of the world bustin' up yit, though things does look kind of skeery jest now. It would jest be my luck if sum 'bominable thing like a war or a coleramorbus, or a starvation was to cum along now that I've got the hansomest and smartest gall in Georgia for a wife. They say ther is no sich thing as cumplete happiness on this yeath, and that makes me think so more, for nothing short of sum monstrous grate calamity could rumple my feathers now. But I do hope it will all blow over. I do b'lieve Mary grows hansomer every day, and if things could stay jest as they is now, I'd like to live til I was old enuff to be gran-

daddy to Methusla. But it's time I was gwine over to mother's to bring her home. So no more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER IX.

Pineville, June 19th, 1843.

Dear Sir,

Everything's went on pretty smooth sense I writ my last letter to you. Mary soon got over her skare, but the way she's mad at Cousin Pete won't wear off in a coon's age. She ses he musent never put his foot in our house, if he don't want to get his old red whiskers scalded off his fool face. She ses she always thought Pete had *some sense*, but now, she ses, she don't know whether he's a bigger rascal than he is a fool.

Wimmin's monstrous curious critters, now 'tween you and me, and it takes more hed than I've got to manage 'em without some diffikilties now and then. It seems to me Mary's gittin curiouser every day. I don't know what upon yeath to make

of her sometimes, she acts so quar. Lord knows, I does everything in my power to please her—I gits everything she wants—I always lets her have her own way in everything, and I stays home with her more'n half my time—but every now and then she takes a cryin' spell, jest for nothin'. Now, I'll jest tell you one little circumstance, jest to let you see how curious she does do me sometimes.

Two or three months ago little Sally Rogers gin her one of the leetlest dogs I reckon you ever did see. It's a little white curly thing 'bout as big as my fist, with little red eyes and a little bushy tail screwed rite over its back so tite that it can't hardly touch its hind legs to the floor, and when it barks it's got a little sharp voice that goes rite through a body's hed like a cotton gimblet. Well, Mary and the galls is all the time washin' and comin', and fixin' it off with ribbons on its neck and tail, and nursin' it in ther laps till they've got the dratted thing so sasy that ther ain't no gittin' along with it.

Whenever I go 'bout Mary it's a snarlin' and snappin' at me, and when ennybody comes in the house, it flies at em' like it was gwine to tare 'em all to pieces, and makes more racket than all the

dogs on the place. It's bit my fingers two or three times, and if I jest tetch it, it'll squall out like its back was broke, and run rite to the wimmin and git under ther chairs, and then the very old harry's to pay.

If ever I say anything about it, then they all say I'm "jealous of poor little Tip," and that I ought to be ashamed of myself to be mad at "the dear little feller." Well, I always laugh it off the best way I can, but I reckon I've wished some rat would catch "poor little Tip" more'n a thousand times, and I wouldn't be surprised if it was to be tuck suddenly sick and die some of these days, 'thout enybody knowing the cause. But I jest want to tell a instance of the devilment he kicks up sometimes.

Last night we was all settin' in the parlour—the galls was sowin', and Mary and me was playin' a game of drafts, and I was jest about to pen her with three kings, when one of the checks happened to drap off the board rite down by Mary's foot. I stooped over to pick it up, when the fust thing I knowd, snap the little devil of a dog tuck me rite by the finger, and then set up a terrible barkin' and run rite behind Mary's foot.

I never wanted to hit nothin' so bad in my life, and I leaned over to tap him on the head, but Mary put her little foot out before him, and I missed Tip's nose about an inch, and he snapped agin. I leaned over further and further, and tried to hit him, but Mary's foot was always in the way every time, and the last time when I was reachin' jest as fur as I could, and her foot was in the way, and the little cus was squealin' and snappin' as hard as he could, I got sort o' out of patience tryin' to hit him, and ses I:

"*Don't* put your foot in the way!"

Jest then down went the "History of England" and all the checks on the floor, and Tip run under Mary's chair, clear out of sight, squallin' like he was killed, when ther wasn't a hair of him tetched. When I ris up my face was a little red, and I would gin a five dollar bill jest to tramp that infernal dog out of his hide. Well, what do you think? the fust thing I knowed Mary was a cryin' like her hart was gwine to brake.

"Why," ses I, "Mary, what's the matter with you? I didn't touch Tip."

She didn't say nothing but jest went on cryin' worse and worse, and told Miss Carline to hand her

the colone water; and ther she sot and cried and snuffed the colone and sighed, and nobody didn't know what the matter was.

"Why, Mary," ses I, "what upon yeath ails you? I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Y-e-s, you-oo-did. I-didn't-think-you-oo-would-speak-so to-oo me, Joseph. I didn't think you'd git mad at me-e-e, so I didn't."

"Why, lord bless your dear soul, I ain't mad at you, Mary!" ses I "what makes you think I could git mad at you?"

"'Cause I didn't want you to hurt poor little Tip—poor little feller, he didn't know no better."

"But, Mary, I wasn't mad at you at all," ses I, "what makes you think so?"

"'Cause you never said *don't* so cross to me before—you said it jest as cross as you could."

"But I wasn't mad, honey—it was reachin' over so fur made me speak sort o' quick," ses I, "I never was mad at you in my life."

But in spite of all I could say or do I couldn't git her in a good humour the whole evenin', jest 'cause I said "don't" to her when she kep' puttin' her foot in my way. It's all over now, but I dasn't look sideways at Tip for fear he'll kick up another

fuss. It's monstrous curious. I know Mary loves me, and ther ain't a sweeter tempered nor a better gall in Georgia, but they all have such curious ways sometimes. Old Miss Stallins say it's always so at first, but she ses Mary'll git over all them little childish notions one of these days. Ther's one thing certain, I wish ther was no little dogs in our family.

I never was so supprised in my life as when I heard 'bout them oudacious bank robbers. I think they better alter the law about jurys, so that when they want to try criminal cases hereafter, they can jest send to the Penitentiary and git twelve fellers at once to come and be jurymen. They'd answer the purpose jest as well, and then honest men wouldn't be put to no trouble to go to court jest to be objected to by the lawyers on account of ther good charaters. Besides it's a insult to a decent man to be put on a jury now, in a criminal case.

Ther was a trial in our county not long ago of a feller what had killed a man and robbed him of a heap of money. Ther was lots of lawyers here in his favour, and when they come to pick out the jury ther was hardly twelve men in the county that

the lawyers thought mean enough to set on the case. They was two days a gittin' a jury, and every time they called up a decent lookin' man, the prisoner's lawyers would look at him and say, "give him the book," and if he sed he hadn't formed and expressed no opinion as to the gilt of the prisoner, (which most every man that cared anything about law or justice had done,) they'd look at him close, and then whisper to one another, and if they hadn't never heard of his robin' anybody's hen-roost or stealin' anything, they'd say, "object."

Mose Sanders was called up, and Mose ain't a very good-lookin' feller, though he's a honest man as ever lived. They looked at Mose awhile, and he felt sort o' bashful I s'pose, and looked sort o' mean, and they said "content." Well, the case was tryed, and it was such a perfect open and shut bisness that they couldn't help bringin' the feller in guilty in spite of the lawyers. But ther ain't a man in the county that is got any confidence in Mose Sanders after that—his character is completely ruined, cause everybody thinks the lawyers wouldn't tuck him on that jury if they didn't know he was a rascal. For my own part I would jest as leav be s'picioned of stealin' a sheep, as to be put upon

a criminal jury by the lawyers now-a-days. No more from

Your frend, til deth,

Jos. Jones.

LETTER X.

Pineville, Ga., March 21st, 1844.

Dear Sir,

You mustn't think hard cause I hain't rit you a letter for so long a time. Sense the arrival of the little stranger, my time what I've had to spare from the plantation is been pretty much tuck up with nussin' and gwine to town after doctor stuff for it.

Babys is wundrous supprisin' things, Mr. Thompson, as you know, and when one thinks how much trouble they give a body, we almost wunder what makes us so anxious to have 'em. You mustn't think I'm beginnin' to git tired of mine. No indeed, not by no means. I wouldn't give my little Harry Clay for all the niggers and plantations in Georgy, as much trouble and worryment as he gives me. Ain't it curious what store we do set

by the little creeters, even before we've had 'em long enuff to know anything about 'em. It seems like a new fountin of happyness is opened in our harts, a new value given to everything we've got, and a new purpose to our lives, when for the fust time we look upon a little helpless bein' that is born of our love, and is dependent on us for support and protection. How anxious we is to do everything we can for 'em! What pleasure we find in the pains we take to make 'em happy. But you is a man of experience in these matters, Mr. Thompson, and I needn't tell you nothin' abou it. I must tell you though, what a terrible skeer we had t'other night with the baby.

I had been down to Tom Stallinses mill, to see about gittin' out some lumber to bild me a new gin-house, and had been ridin' and workin' hard all day in the wet, and cum home monstrous tired, late in the evenin'. Mary and the baby was all well, and I went to bed pretty early, thinkin' to git a good nite's rest for the fust time in a month. Well, how long I'd been sleepin', I can't tell, but the fust thing I know'd was Mary pullin' my hair to make me wake up.

"Joseph!—Joseph!" ses she.

"Ha! what's the matter?" ses I, when I seed her leanin' over in the bed with the lamp in her hand, and her face as pale as the gown she had on.

"Oh, Joseph, do git up," ses she, "something's the matter with the baby."

That was enuff for me, and in a twinklin' I was settin' up in the bed, as wide awake as if I hadn't been asleep in a week.

"Look at him, Joseph—he acts so curious," ses she, as she tuck the little feller out of his crib, and laid him down in the bed between us.

For 'bout two minits we both sot and looked at the baby, 'thout drawin' a breth. Thar it lay on its back, with its little hands down by its side. Fust it would spread its mouth like it was laughin' at something—then it would roll its eyes about in its hed and wink 'em at us—then it would twitch all over, and ketch its breth—then it would lay right still and stop breathin' for a second or two, and then it would twitch its little lims agin, and roll its eyes about the strangest I ever seed anything in my life, and then it would coo, so pitiful, like a little dove, two or three times, till it would kind of smuther like, and stop breathin' agin.

I could hear Mary's hart beat quite plain, and I felt the cold blood runnin' back to mine like a mill-tail. I looked at Mary, and she looked at me, and such a expression as she had in her eyes I never seed in any human.

"Joseph!" ses she.

"Mary!" ses I.

"Oh, dear!" ses she, the big tears fillin' her butiful eyes. "Oh, dear! the baby is dyin'—I know it is. Oh, what *shall* we do?"

"Oh no, Mary, don't get skeered," ses I, with what little breth I could summons up for the effort.

"Oh yes, I know it is. I know'd something was gwine to happen, I had sich a dreadful dream last night. Git up, Joseph, and call muther and the galls, quick as you can. Oh dear me, my poor little baby!"

"Don't take on, Mary—maybe 'taint nothin' bad," ses I, tryin' to compose her all I could, though I was scared as bad as she was, and put my trowsers on wrong side before in my hurryment.

In a minit I had all the fam'ly up, and by the time I got the fire kindled, here cum old Miss

Stallins and the galls, all in ther nite clothes, skeered almost out of ther senses.

"Dear me, what upon yeath's the matter?" ses old Miss Stallins.

"Oh, the baby! the baby!" cried Mary.

"What is happened?" ses all of 'em, getherin' round the bed.

"I don't know what ails it," ses Mary, "but it acts so strange—like it was gwine to dy."

"Mercy on us!" ses the galls.

"Don't take on so, my child," ses old Miss Stallins. "It mought be very bad for you."

But poor Mary didn't think of anything but the baby.

"What's good for it, muther? what'll cure it?" ses she.

The old woman put on her specticles, and looked at it, and felt it all over, while Mary was holdin' it in her lap by the fire.

"Don't be skared," ses she. "Don't be skared, my child, maybe it's nothing but the hives, or the yaller thrash, or some other baby ailment, what won't hurt it."

"Oh, it'll dy—I know it will," ses Mary.

"Maybe its only sick at its little stummick,

muther," ses sister Carline, "and some sut tea is the best thing in the world for that, they say."

"And if it's the thrash, some catnip tea will drive it out in half a ower," ses the old woman. "Prissy, make some catnip tea, quick as you can."

"And have some water warmed to bathe its little feet in," ses sister Kesiah; "for maybe its spasomy."

"Oh dear, see how it winks its eyes!" ses Mary.

"That ain't nothing uncommon, dear," ses her muther.

"Now it's twitchin' its little lims again. Oh, it will dy, I know it will."

"Wouldn't some saffron tea be good for it?" ses Miss Carline. "Poor little dear!"

"Yes, and a musterd poultice for its little bowels," ses the old woman.

By this time all the niggers on the place was up gettin' hot-baths, and teas, and musterd poultices, and ingun-juice, and Lord knows what all, for the baby. Muther and the galls was flyin' about like they was crazy, and I was so tarrified myself that I

didn't know which eend I stood on. In the hurrymment and confusion, Aunt Katy upsot the tea-kittle and scalded little Moses, and he sot up a yell in the kitchin loud enuff to be heard a mile, and I knocked the lamp off the table, and spilled the oil all everything, tryin' to turn round three ways at the same time. After breakin' two or three cups and sassers, and settin' Mary's night-cap afire with the candle, old Miss Stallins made out to git a tea-spoonful of sut tea in the baby's mouth, hot enuff to scald its life out, and then ther was such another to-do as nobody ever did hear before.

"Wa!—wa-ya!—ke-wa!—ke-wa-ah!" went the baby.

"Good gracious! mother, the tea's bilin' hot," ses sister Carline.

"My lord! Prissy, hain't you got no better sense? What upon yeath did you give it to me so hot for?" ses the old woman when she put her finger in the cup.

"Miss Kesiah tell me pour bilin' water on it," ses Prissy, with her eyes as big as sassers.

"Wa-ya! ke-wa-ah! ke-wa!" ses the baby, kickin' and fistin' away like all rath.

"Whar's the draps, Joseph? Git the draps, it must be colicky," ses old Miss Stallins.

I got the parrygorrick as quick as I could, and tried to pour out five draps, as she told me. But my hand trimbled so I couldn't drap it to save me.

"Give it to me, Joseph," ses she; "you's too agitated."

And she tuck the vial, and poured half of it on her lap, tryin' to hit the spoon—the poor old woman's eyes is so bad. Then she told sister Carline to drap it—but both the galls was 'fraid they mought pour too much. So Mary had to do it herself. Then the next difficulty was to git it in the baby's mouth, and when they did git it thar, it liked to choke it to deth before it could swaller it.

Pretty soon after that it got quiet, and went sound to sleep in Mary's lap, and we all begun to feel a good deal better. Old Miss Stallins sed she know'd what it wanted as soon as she had time to think, and she wondered she didn't think of it before. Lord only know'd what mought happened if we hadn't the parrygorrick in the house. We all felt so good after we got over our skare, that we sot

thar and congratulated one another a little while before gwine to bed agin.

While we was all chattin' and old Miss Stallins was beginnin' to nod, I noticed Mary was watchin' the baby monstrous close, and her eyes was beginnin to git bigger and bigger, as she looked at its face. Bimeby it groaned one of the longest kind of groans.

"Oh dear!" ses Mary, "I do b'lieve it's dyin' agin!"

We all jumped up and run to her, and shure enuff, it looked a heap worse than it did before, and kep' all the time moanin' like it was breathin' its last gasp.

"Oh, mother, its gwine! It's jest as limber as a rag, and it's got sich a terrible deth look. Send for the docter, quick," ses Mary, trimblin' all over, and lookin' as if she was gwine to faint in her cheer.

Miss Carline tuck hold of its little hands, and moved 'em, but they was jest like a ded baby's, and staid anywhar she put 'em.

Ned was sent to town for Doctor Gaiter, as hard as the hoss could go—Mary and the galls all fell a-cryin' like they was at a funerel, and I felt so

fainty myself that I couldn't hardly stand on my feet. Old Miss Stallins would give the baby some ingin-juice, and have it put in a warm bath all over; but nothing we could do for it done it any good, and we jest had to wait in a agony of suspense til the doctor cum.

It ain't only three miles to town, and Selim's one of the fastest hosses in Georgia, but it seemed like the docter would never cum.

"Poor little thing!" ses Mary; "I know'd my hart was sot on him too much—I know'd it was too pretty and sweet to live. Oh, dear!"

"How it does suffer—poor little angel," ses Miss Carline; "what kin ail the child?"

"I wish the docter would cum," ses all of 'em.

Sich thoughts as I had in that ower, I never want to have agin, as long as I live. A coffin, with a little baby in its shroud, was all the time before my eyes, and a whole funeral procession was passin' through my hed. The sermon was ringin' in my ears, and I could almost hear the rumblin' of the fust shovelful of yeath on the grave boards of my little boy, as I walked round and round the room, stoppin' now and then to take a look at the pore

little thing, and to speak a word of incouragement to Mary. It was a dredful feelin', Mr. Thompson, and I do b'lieve I've felt ten years older ever sense.

Bimeby we heard the hosses feet—all of us drawed a long breth, and every face brightened up at the sound. In a minit more the docter laid his saddle-bags on the table.

"Good evenin', ladies," ses he, jest as pleasin' and perlite as if nothing wasn't the matter. "Good evenin', Majer; how are you this—"

"The baby! the baby!" ses all of 'em. "Docter, can't you cure the baby?"

"Yes, docter," ses Mary, "our only hope is in you, docter."

"And Providence, my child," ses old Miss Stallins.

It seemed like the docter never would git all his grate-coats, and gloves, and hankerchers off, though the wimmin was hurryin' him and helpin' him all they could. Bimeby he drawed a cheer up to whar Mary was sittin' to look at the baby.

"What's the matter with yer child, Mrs. Jones?" ses he, pullin' away its gown and feelin' its pulse.

"I don't know, docter; but it's dredful sick," ses Mary.

"When was it tuck sick, and what is its simptoms?" ses the docter.

All of 'em begun to tell at once, til the docter told 'em he could understand 'em better if they'd only talk one at a time, and then Mary told him all about it.

"And how much parrygorrick did you give it?" ses Docter Gaiter.

"Five draps," ses old Miss Stallins, "I wanted to give it more, but the children was all so skeery."

"Let me see your parrygorrick," ses the docter.

He tuck it and smelled it, and tasted it, and then, says he:

"You're sure you didn't give it only five draps, Madam?"

"No, no more'n five," ses Mary, "for I poured it out myself."

Then the docter looked monstrous wise at the baby, for 'bout a minit, and if you could jest seed the wimmin lookin' at him. None of us breathed a single breth, and poor Mary looked rite in the docter's face, as if she wanted to see his very thoughts.

"Doc—"

"Is—"

"Don't be 'larmed, Madam," ses he, "ther ain't no danger!"

Sich a change as cum over the crowd! The room seemed to git lighter in a instant. It was like the sunlight breakin' through a midnight sky.

Mary cried like a child, and hugged her baby to her bussum, and kissed it a dozen times, and talked baby talk to it; and the galls begun puttin' the room to rights, so it would be fit for the docter to see it.

"Is you sure ther ain't no danger, docter?" ses old Miss Stallins.

"None in the least, Madam," ses he. "Ther's nothing in the world the matter of the child, only it had a little touch of the hives, what made it laugh and roll its eyes about in its sleep. In your fright, you burnt its mouth with yer hot teas, till it cried a little, and then you've doctered it with hot baths, ingin-juice, and parrygorrick, till you've stupified it a little. That's all, Madam. By mornin' it'll be well as ever it was, if you don't give it no more big doses of parrygorrick."

"I sed so," ses old Miss Stallins. "I told the child ther was no use in takin' on so 'bout the baby. But young people is so easy skeered, you know, docter."

"Yes, and old grandmothers too, sumtimes," ses he, laughin'.

The baby soon quit moanin' so bad, and Mary laid it in the bed and kiver'd it over with kisses.

"Bless it, mudder's tweetest 'ittle darlin' baby—its dittin' well, so it is—and dey sant dive it no more natty fisies, and burn its tweet 'ittle mouf no more, so dey sant," ses she; and the galls got round, and sich a everlastin' gabblement as they did keep up.

By this time it was most daylight, and after drinkin' a cup of strong coffee what old Miss Stallins had made for him, and laughin' at us for bein' so skared at nothing, the good old docter bundled on his clothes, and went home to charge me five dollars for routin' him out of his bed and makin' him ride six miles in the cold. But I ain't sorry we sent for him, for I do b'lieve if he hadn't cum, we would dosed poor little Harry ded as a door nail before mornin'. The little feller is doin' prime now, and if he was to have another attack of the hives, I'll take monstrous good care they don't give him no more dratted parrygorrick. So no more from

Your frend, til deth,

JOS. JONES.

LETTER XI.

Pineville, Ga., April 10th, 1844.

Dear Sir,

I've been thinkin' 'bout ritin' a letter one of these days, but the fact is, sense last Febuary, I hain't had much time for nothing. The baby's been cross as the mischief, most all the time sense it had the hives, and Mary, she's been ailin' a good deal, ever sense she got that terrible scare last month —and then you know this time of year we planters is all as bissy as we can be, fixin' for the crap.

Nothin' very uncommon hain't took place down here sense I rit my last letter to you, only t'other day a catasterfy happened in our family that come monstrous nigh puttin' a eend to the whole generation of us. I never was so near skeered out of my senses afore in all my born days, and I don't b'lieve old Miss Stallins ever will git over it, if she was to live a thousand years. But I'll tell you all about it.

Last Monday mornin' all of us got up well and harty as could be, and I sot in our room with Mary, and played with the baby till breckfust time, little thinkin' what was gwine to happen so soon. The little feller was jumpin' and crowin' so I couldn't hardly hold him in my arms, and spreadin' his little

mouth, and laughin' jest like he know'd everything we sed to him.

Bimeby, Ant Prissy cum to tell us breckfust was reddy, and we all went into t'other room to eat, 'cept sister Kesiah, who sed she would stay and take care of little Henry Clay, till we was done. Mary's so careful she won't trust the baby with none of the niggers a single minit, and she's always dredful oneasy when Kesiah's got it, she's so wild and so careless.

Well we sot down to breckfust, and Kesiah, she scampered up stairs to her room with the baby, jumpin' it up, and kissin' it, and talkin' to it as hard as she could.

"Now, sis, do be careful of my precious little darlin'," ses Mary, loud as she could to her, when she was gwine up stairs.

"Oh, eat your breckfust, child, and don't be so tarrified 'bout the baby," ses old Miss Stallins—"you don't 'low yerself a minit's peace when it's out of yer sight."

"That's a fact," ses sister Carline, "she won't let nobody do anything for little Henry but herself. I know I wouldn't be so crazy 'bout no child of mine."

"Well, but you know sister Kiz is so careless—

I'm always afraid she'll let it swaller something, or git a fall some way," ses Mary.

"Tut, tut," ses the old woman, "ther ain't no sense in bein' all the time scared to deth 'bout nothing. People's got enuff to do in this world to bear ther trouble when it comes, 'thout studdyin' it up all the time. Take some of them good hot corn muffins," ses she, "they's mighty nice."

We was all eatin' along — the old woman was talkin' 'bout her garden and the frost, how it had nipped her Inglish peas, and I was jest raisin my coffee cup to my mouth, when I heard Kesiah scream out:

"Oh, my Lord! the baby! the baby!" and kerslash! it cum rite down stairs on to the floor.

Lightnin' couldn't knocked me off my seat quicker! Down went the coffee, and over went the table and all the vittles. Mary screamed, and old Miss Stallins fainted rite away in her cheer. I was so blind I couldn't hardly see, but I never breathed a breth til I grabbed it up in my arms and run round the house two or three times, 'fore I had the hart to look at the poor little thing, to see if it was ded.

By this time the galls was holt of my coat tail, hollerin' "April Fool! April Fool!" as hard as

they could, and when I cum to look, I had nothing in my arms but a bundle of rags with little Henry Clay's clothes on. I shuck all over like I had the ager, and felt a monstrous sight more like cussin' than laughin'.

"April Fool, dingnation!" ses I: "fun's fun; but I'm dad blamed if ther's any fun in any sich doin's," and I was jest gwine to blow out a little, when I heard Mary screamin' for me to cum to her mother.

When we got in the dinin' room, thar the old woman was, keeled over in her cheer, with her eyes sot in her hed and a corn muffin stickin' in her mouth. Mary was takin' on at a terrible rate, and all she could do was jest to clapp her hands and holler.

"Oh, mother's dyin'! mother's dyin'! whar's the baby? Oh, my poor mother! Oh, my darlin' baby!"

I tuck Mary and splained it all to her and tried to quiet the poor gall, and the galls got at the old woman; but it tuck all sorts of rubbin', and ever so much assafedity, and campfire and hartshorn, and burnt hen's feathers to bring her too; and then she wouldn't stay brung too more'n a minit 'fore she'd keel over agin, and I do b'lieve if they hadn't brung little Henry Clay to her, so she could see him and feel him, and hear him squall, she never

would got her senses agin, She aint more'n half at herself yit. All the gals kin do they can't make her understand the April Fool bisiness, and she won't let nobody else but herself nuss the baby ever sense.

As soon as I had time to think a little, I was so monstrous glad it wasn't no worse, that I couldn't stay mad with the galls. But I tell you what, I was terrible rathy for a few minits. I don't b'lieve in this April foolin'. Last year the galls deviled me almost to deth with ther bominable nonsense, sowin up the legs of my trowsers, punchin' holes in the water gourd, so I wet my shirt busom all over when I went to drink, and heatin' the handle of the tongs, and cuttin' the cowhide bottoms of the cheers loose, so I'd fall through 'em when I went to set down, and all sich devilment. I know the Bible ses there's a time for all things; but I think the least a body has to do with fool bisiness at any time the better for 'em. I'm monstrous tired of sich doin's myself, and if I didn't think the galls had got ther fill of April foolin' this time, I'd try to git a almynack next year what didn't have no fust day of April in it.

No more from your frend til deth,

Jos. Jones.

XXVI.

DOWN-EAST CURIOSITY.*

On my voyage up the North River, I was seated in the cabin reading a newspaper, when I observed an odd-looking individual reading over my shoulder. I looked up in his face, when the fellow, with his hands in his pocket, and not in the least disconcerted at being caught in so impertinent and unmannerly an act, exclaimed:

"Any news in particular?"

"No, Sir; will you accept the paper?"

"Oh no! can't; ain't got time. It's the first

* By G. H. Hill.

time I've been up this river, and I want to be looking reound. How can they take a fellow up this river for a dollar and found. They can't dew it. It's a take-in."

"How is that?"

"Why they charge one dollar to take you in, and when you git up to Albany, you've got to pay another dollar to git eout. Got this place all fixed up so. Sophy's all reound tew. I never use Sophy's myself, but once courted a gal by that name, and it looks a kind o' natural to see Sophy's reound; and them stuffed-bottom chairs eout there. I thought I'd set deown on 'em; by thunder, I jumped up three feet. Oh, I'll be darned if I didn't think I was sitting down on somebody's baby. You see I chaw tobacco; grandfather chawed, and father he chawed, and mother, she—eh—no, she didn't she snuffed, so you see I have to keep running up to expectorate—as our doctor says, overboard. I expect I shall have to go again in about a minute."

"You need not take that trouble, Sir," said I "here are spittoons."

"Spittoons! Oh yes, I know'd what them was for, but they've got 'em brightened up so, I didn't like to nasty 'em. I went to the the-ater to see

you t'other night. Didn't you see me? I sot right in front of you."

"No, Sir, I did not."

"Wal, I don't suppose you could; there was a hull lot of fellers there. I got jammed in. I had on a striped vest, the fronts were new, but the backs being made of cotton, sometimes will give eout. By golly, I got tew laughing, so away went the back, slitted right up to the collar. I was a little the tornest critter you ever did see."

"I am very sorry for your misfortune," I remarked.

"Oh, you needn't fret abeout it, stranger. I shouldn't a wore it much more nor three weeks longer, any how. You see I never wear my best clothes to sich places, 'cause it kind a rips them eout a leetle. I had a bet abeout you. Some feller said you was born on Long Island. I told him you wasn't, you was born down-east."

"You were right, Sir, I was born in one of the Eastern States."

"There, I know'd you was, 'cause I know'd you couldn't get along so well as you did, if you wasn't born deown that way somewhere. Have you been in Massachusetts?"

"Yes, Sir," I said.

"Been in the State of Maine?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Been in New Hampshire?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Ah! Maybe you was born there? They've got a good many Hills."

"No, Sir, I was not."

"Wal, you might have been. Ever been in Vermont?"

"Yes, Sir."

"You know old Zeke Hill?"

"No, Sir."

"Nor I nuther, but I've hearn tell there was such a feller, didn't know but you might have known him tew."

"Have you ever been in Connecticut?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Ever been in Rhode Island? that little bit of a thing in there."

"Yes, Sir."

"Have you ever been in Boston?"

"Yes, Sir."

Having thus obtained nothing very satisfactory from me, in relation to my birth-place, he

commenced asking me if I had been to the Capital of this State, and then the other, until he had got through the whole of them; he then, to my astonishment, commenced with the country towns, doubtless with the hope of hitting at last upon the one in which I was born. Getting a little out of patience, I said:

"I presume, Sir, you wish to ascertain where I was born?"

"Wal, yes, I shouldn't mind knowing, if you have no objection to tell, and if you had told me before, you would have saved me a darned sight of trouble."

"Well," I said, "I was born in Boston, in the year 1809, on the 8th day of October, at six o'clock in the morning."

"At six o'clock, eh?"

"At six o'clock precisely, down in Water Street."

"Dew tell. But, stranger, *dew you remember the number of the house?*"

XXVII.

A SAGE CONVERSATION.

I LOVE the aged matrons of our land. As a class, they are the most pious, the most benevolent, the most useful, and the most harmless of the human family. Their life is a life of good offices. At home, they are patterns of industry, care, economy, and hospitality; abroad, they are ministers of comfort, peace, and consolation. Where affliction is, there are they, to mitigate its pangs; where sorrow is, there are they to assuage its pains. Nor night, nor day, nor summer's heat, nor winter's cold, nor angry elements, can deter them from

scenes of suffering and distress. They are the first at the fevered couch, and the last to leave it. They hold the first and last cup to the parched lip. They bind the aching head, close the dying eye, and linger in the death-stricken habitation, to pour the last drop of consolation into the afflicted bosoms of the bereaved. I cannot, therefore, ridicule them myself, nor bear to hear them ridiculed in my presence. And yet, I am often amused at their conversations; and have amused *them* with a rehearsal of their own conversations, taken down by me when they little dreamed that I was listening to them. Perhaps my reverence for their character, conspiring with a native propensity to extract amusement from all that passes under my observation, has accustomed me to pay a uniformly strict attention to all they say in my presence.

This much in extraordinary courtesy to those who cannot distinguish between a simple narrative of an amusing interview, and ridicule of the parties to it. Indeed I do not know that the conversation which I am about to record, will be considered amusing by any of my readers. Certainly the amusement of the readers of my own times is not the leading object of it, or of any of the "Georgia

Scenes;" forlorn as may be the hope, that their main object will ever be answered.

My intention is merely to detail a conversation between three ladies, which I heard many years since; confining myself to only so much of it, as sprung from the ladies' own thoughts, unawakened by the suggestions of others.

I was travelling with my old friend, Ned Brace, when we stopped at the dusk of the evening at a house on the road-side, for the night. Here we found three nice, tidy, aged matrons, the youngest of whom could not have been under sixty; one of them of course was the lady of the house, whose husband, old as he was, had gone from home upon a land-exploring expedition. She received us hospitably, had our horses well attended to, and soon prepared for us a comfortable supper.

While these things were doing, Ned and I engaged the other two in conversation; in the course of which, Ned deported himself with becoming seriousness. The kind lady of the house occasionally joined us, and became permanently one of the party, from the time the first dish was placed on the table.

At the usual hour we were summoned to supper; after which the conversation turned upon marriages, happy and unhappy, strange, unequal, runaways, &c. Ned rose at last, and asked the landlady where we should sleep. She pointed to an open shed-room adjoining the room in which we were sitting, and separated from it by a log partition, between the spaces of which might be seen all that passed in the dining-room; and so close to the fire-place of this apartment, that a loud whisper might be easily heard from one to the other.

I could not resist the temptation of casting an eye through the cracks of the partition to see the effect of Ned's wonderful stories upon the kind ladies. Mrs. Barney (it is time to give their names) was sitting in a thoughtful posture; her left hand supporting her chin, and her knee supporting her left elbow. Her countenance was that of one who suffers from a slight tooth-ache.

Mrs. Shad leaned forward, resting her fore-arm on her knees, and looking into the fire as if she saw *groups of children* playing in it. Mrs. Reed, the landlady, who was the fattest of the three, was thinking and laughing alternately at short intervals. From my bed it required but a slight

change of position to see any one of the group at pleasure.

I was no sooner composed on my pillow, than the old ladies drew their chairs close together, and began the following colloquy in a low undertone, which rose as it progressed:

Mrs. Barney. Didn't that man say them was two *men* that got married to one another?

Mrs. Shad. It seemed to me so.

Mrs. Reed. Why to be sure he did.—I know he said so; for he said what their names was.

Mrs. B. Well, in the name o' sense, what did the man mean?

Mrs. R. Why, bless your heart and soul, honey! that's what I've been thinkin' about. It seems mighty curious to me some how or other. I can't study it out, nohow.

Mrs. S. The man must be jokin', certainly.

Mrs. R. No, he wasn't jokin'; for I looked at him, and he was just as much in yearnest as anybody I ever *seed;* and besides, no *Christian* man would tell such a story in that solemn way.

Mrs. S. But la' messy! Mis' Reed, it can't be so. It doesn't stand to reason, don't you know it don't?

Mrs. R. Well, I wouldn't think so; but it's hard for me, somehow, to dispute a *Christian* man's word.

Mrs. B. I've been thinking the thing all over in my mind, and I reckon—now I don't say it is so, for I don't know nothing at all about it—but I reckon that one o' them men was a woman dress'd in men's clothes; for I've often hearn o' women doin' them things, and following their True-love to the wars, and bein' a watin'-boy to 'em and all sich.

The ladies here took leave of Ned's marvellous story, drew themselves closely round the fire, lighted their pipes, and proceeded as follows:

Mrs. B. Jist before me and my old man was married, there was a gal name Nancy Mountcastle (*puff—puff*), and she was a mighty likely gal—(*puff*), I know'd her mighty well—she dressed herself up in men's clothes—(*puff, puff*), and followed Jemmy Darden from P'ankatank, in *King and Queen*—(*puff*), clean up to *Loudon*.

Mrs. S. (*puff, puff, puff, puff, puff.*) And did he marry her?

Mrs. B. (*sighing deeply.*) No: Jemmy didn't marry her—pity he hadn't, poor thing.

Mrs. R. Well, I know'd a gal on Tar River, done the same thing—(*puff, puff, puff.*) She followed Moses Rusher 'way down somewhere in the South State—(*puff, puff.*)

Mrs. S. (*puff, puff, puff, puff.*) And what did he do?

Mrs. R. Ah—(*puff, puff,*) Lord bless your soul, honey, I can't tell you what he did. Bad enough.

Mrs. B. Well, now it seems to me—I don't know much about it—but it seems to me men don't like to marry gals that take on that way. It looks like it puts 'em out o' concait of 'em.

Mrs. S. I know'd one man that married a woman that followed him from Car'lina to this State; but she didn't dress herself in men's clothes. You both know 'em. You know Simpson Trotty's sister and Rachel's son, Reuben. 'Twas him and his wife.

Mrs. R. and Mrs. B. Oh yes, I know 'em mighty well.

Mrs. S. Well it was his wife—she followed him out to this State.

Mrs. B. I know'd 'em all mighty well. Her da'ter Lucy was the littlest teeny bit of a thing when it was born I ever did see. But they tell me that when I was born—now I don't know anything

about it myself—but the old folks used to tell me, that when I was born, they put me in a quart-mug, and mought o' covered me up in it.

Mrs. S. The lackaday!

Mrs. R. What ailment did Lucy die of Mis' Barny?

Mrs. B. Why, first she took the ager and fever, and took a 'bundance o' doctor'r means for that. And then she got a powerful bad cough, and it kept gittin' worse and worse, till at last it turned into a consumption, and she jist nat'ly wasted away, till she was nothing but skin and bone, and she died; but, poor creater, she died mighty happy; and I think in my heart, she made the prettiest corpse, considerin', of any bod I most ever seed.

Mrs. R. and Mrs. S. Emph! (*solemnly.*)

Mrs. R. What did the doctors give her for the fever and ager?

Mrs. B. Oh, they gin' her a 'bundance o' truck—I don't know what all; and none of 'em holp her at all. But at last she got over it, somehow or other. If they'd have just gin' her a sweat o' bitter yerbs, jist as the spell was comin' on, it would have cured her right away.

Mrs. R. Well, I reckon sheep-saffron the onliest thing in nater for the ager.

Mrs. B. I've always hearn it was wonderful in hives, and measly ailments.

Mrs. R. Well, it's jist as good for an ager—it's a powerful sweat. Mrs. Clarkson told me, that her cousin Betsey's aunt Sally's Nancy was cured sound and well by it, of a hard shakin' ager.

Mrs. S. Why you don't tell me so!

Mrs. R. Oh bess your heart, honey, it's every word true; for she told me so with her own mouth.

Mrs. S. A hard, hard shakin' ager!

Mrs. R. Oh yes, honey, it's the truth.

Mrs. S. Well, I'm told that if you'll wrap the inside skin of an egg round your little finger, and go three days reg'lar to a young persimmon, and tie a string round it, and every day, tie three knots in it, and then not go agin for three days, that the ager will leave you.

Mrs. B. I've often hearn o' that, but I don't know about it. Some people don't believe in it.

Mrs. S. Well, Davy Cooper's wife told me she didn't believe in it; but she tried it, and it cured her sound and well.

Mrs. R. I've hearn of many folks bein' cured in that way. And what did they do for Lucy's cough, Mis' Barney?

Mrs. B. Oh dear me, they gin' her a powerful

chance o' truck. I reckon, first and last, she took at least a pint o' lodimy.

Mrs. S. and Mrs. R. The law!

Mrs. S. Why that ought to have killed her, if nothing else. If they'd jist gin' her a little cumfry and *a*lecampane, stewed in honey, or sugar, or molasses, with a little lump o' mutton suet or butter in it: it would have cured her in two days sound and well.

Mrs. B. I've always counted cumfry and alecampane the lead of all yerbs for colds.

Mrs. S. Horehound and sugar's 'mazin' good.

Mrs. B. Mighty good—mighty good.

Mrs. R. Powerful good. I take mightily to a sweat of sage-tea, in desperate bad colds.

Mrs. S. And so do I, Miss Reid. Indeed I have a great leanin' to sweats of yerbs, in all ailments sich as colds, and rheumaty pains, and pleurisies, and sich—they're wonderful good. Old brother Smith came to my house from Bethany meeting, in a mighty bad way, with a cold, and cough, and his throat and nose all stopt up; seemed like it would 'most take his breath away, and it was dead o' winter, and I had nothin' but dried yerbs, sich as camomile, sage, pennyryal, catmint, horehound, and sich; so I put a hot rock to his feet, and made him

a large bowl o' catmint tea, and I reckon he drank 'most two quarts of it through the night, and it put him in a mighty fine sweat, and loosened all the *phleem*, and opened all his head; and the next morning, says he to me, says he: "Sister Shad" (you know he's a mighty kind spoken man, and always was so 'fore he joined society; and the old man likes a joke yet right well, the old man does; but he's a mighty good man, and I think he prays with greater libity, than 'most any one of his age I 'most ever seed)—Don't you think he does, Miss Reed?

Mrs. R. Powerful.

Mrs. B. Who did he marry?

Mrs. S. Why, he married—stop, I'll tell you directly — Why, what does make my old head forget so?

Mrs. B. Well, it seems to me I don't remember like I used to. Didn't he marry a Ramsbottom?

Mrs. R. No. Stay, I'll tell you who he married presently—Oh, stay! why I'll tell you who he married!—He married old daddy Johnny Hooer's d'ater, Mournin'.

Mrs. S. Why, la! messy on me, so he did!

Mrs. B. Why, did he marry a Hooer?

Mrs. S. Why, to be sure he did.—You knew Mournin'?

Mrs. B. Oh, mighty well; but I'd forgot that brother Smith married her: I really thought he married a Ramsbottom.

Mrs. R. Oh no, bless your soul, honey, he married Mournin'.

Mrs. B. Well, the law me, I'm clear beat!

Mrs. S. Oh, it's so, you may be sure it is.

Mrs. B. Emp, emph, emph, emph! And brother Smith married Mournin' Hooer! Well, I'm clear put out! Seems to me I'm gittin' mighty forgetful somehow.

Mrs. S. Oh yes, he married Mournin', and I saw her when she joined society.

Mrs. B. Why, you don't tell me so!

Mrs. S. Oh, it's the truth. She didn't join till after she was married, and the church took on mightily about his marrying one out of society. But after she joined, they all got satisfied.

Mrs. R. Why, la! me, the seven stars is 'way over here!

Mrs. B. Well, let's light our pipes, and take a short smoke, and go to bed. How did you come on raisin' chickens this year, Mis' Shad!

Mrs. S. La messy, honey! I have had mighty bad luck. I had the prettiest pa'sel you most ever seed till the varment took to killin' 'em.

Mrs. R. and Mrs. B. The varment!

Mrs. S. Oh dear, yes. The hawk catched a powerful sight of them; and then the varment took to 'em, and nat'ly took 'em fore and aft, bodily, till they left most none at all hardly. Sucky counted 'em up t'other day, and there war'nt but thirty-nine, she said, countin' in the old speckle hen's chickens that jist come off of her nest.

Mrs. R. and Mrs. B. Humph—h—h—h—!

Mrs. R. Well, I've had bad luck too. Billy's hound-dogs broke up most all my nests.

Mrs. B. Well, so they did me, Miss Reed. I always did despise a hound-dog upon the face of yea'th.

Mrs. R. Oh, they're the bawllinest, squallinest, thievishest things ever was about one; but Billy will have 'em, and I think in my soul his old Troup's the beat of all creaters I ever seed in all my born days a suckin' o' hen's eggs—He's clean most broke me up entirely.

Mrs. S. The lackaday!

Mrs. R. And them that was hatched out, some took to takin' the gaps, and some the pip, and one ailment or other, till they most all died.

Mrs. S. Well I reckon there must be somethin' in the season this year, that an't good for fowls; for Larkin Goodman's brother Jimme's wife's aunt Penny, told me, she lost most all her fowls with different sorts of ailments, the like of which she never seed before—They'd jist go 'long lookin', right well, and tilt right over backwards, (*Mrs. B.* The law!) and die right away, (*Mrs. R.* Did ever!) with a sort o' somethin' like the blind staggers.

Mrs. B. and Mrs. R. Messy on me!

Mrs. B. I reckon they must have eat somethin' didn't agree with them.

Mrs. S. No they didn't, for she fed 'em every mornin' with her own hand.

Mrs. B. Well, it's mighty curious!

A short pause ensued, which was broken by Mrs. Barney, with — "And brother Smith married Mournin' Hooer!" It came like an opiate upon my senses, and I dropt asleep.

THE END.

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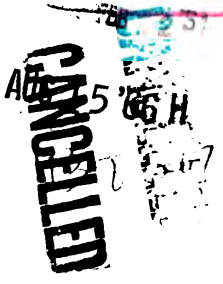

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